

THE VIENNA GALLERY

MASTERPIECES FROM THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

WITH A
HUNDRED
PLATES
IN FULL
COLOUR

TEXT BY
VINZENZ
OBERHAMMER

THAMES
AND
HUDSON

THE VIENNA GALLERY

MASTERPIECES FROM THE
KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

Vinzenz Oberhammer

THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM in Vienna, once a royal treasury of art, today is undoubtedly one of the great national art galleries of the world. The origins of the Museum are traceable to the Renaissance, and in the painting collections the character of these origins has been preserved to a greater extent than in most comparable institutions.

The present volume is the first extensive presentation in English of the Kunsthistorisches Museum's painting collections. This assemblage of art is the legacy of the imperial House of Austria, which resided for six centuries in Vienna. The Hapsburg family's taste in art was sometimes idiosyncratic, but always unerring and wonderfully varied. The desire to collect Renaissance paintings as well as contemporary artists' work was the pleasure of those ruling the Viennese court over successive reigns. Thus, for hundreds of years excellence succeeded excellence. Rudolf II, the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, and Empress Maria Theresa were major creators of the picture gallery. As connoisseurs, they admired and bought Dürer, Titian, Bruegel. Endorsed by the royal family, these masters and such later painters as Rubens and Van Dyck are to be seen here in unparalleled glory.

Thus we have the splendid collection of Early Netherlandish panel paintings, seventeenth-century Flemish masterpieces, many major works by the sixteenth-century Venetians, the paintings of Caravaggio and his circle, works by the masters of the Danube school, the Holbein portraits, the jewels of seventeenth-century Dutch art by Hals, Rembrandt and Vermeer, the Italian Renaissance painters, the eighteenth-century Italian *vedute*, and many more collections of outstanding interest. Among the Gallery's chief attractions are the fine group of portraits by Velázquez and his followers.

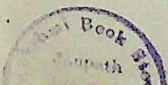
The authoritative text by Vinzenz Oberhammer, director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, is scholarly and informative. It fills a long-standing need for such an account and will delight art lovers, students, and all those who may be visiting Vienna for the first time. The complementary harmony of text and illustrations, serves to bring to the public a major museum too little known in this country.

100 plates in colour

112 monochrome illustrations

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MASTERPIECES FROM THE
KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

VINZENZ OBERHAMMER

100 COLOUR PLATES



THAMES AND HUDSON LONDON

THE NOTES ON THE PLATES WERE WRITTEN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
GUSTAV AND VITA MARIA KÜNSTLER

TRANSLATED FROM
DIE GEMÄLDEGALERIE DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN MUSEUMS IN WIEN
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Foreword

The picture gallery of the Kunsthistorisches Museum at Vienna is undoubtedly one of the most important and distinguished in the world. It owes its reputation not to a complete historical survey of all schools and masters—which is what the founders of art museums in the nineteenth century aimed at—but to its rich array of outstanding works from particular fields. Thus, the fame of one part of the Vienna Gallery is based on the collection of Early Netherlandish panel paintings; on the Dürer room, with the "Adoration of the Trinity" as its focus; on the pictures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, which amount to almost a third of his entire œuvre; on the works of Rudolph II's Court Painters; and especially on the seventeenth-century Flemish masterpieces by Rubens, Van Dyck, and others. Then, turning to Italian art, the Gallery boasts first and foremost many major works by the leading sixteenth-century Venetians—Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese—who nowhere else in the world are so fully represented; but also pictures by Caravaggio and his circle, as well as examples of subsequent Baroque painting. If we add, on the one hand, the works by masters of the Danube school—Cranach, Altdorfer, Wolf Huber—and the Holbein portraits, or the jewels of seventeenth-century Dutch art by Hals, Rembrandt, and Vermeer; and, on the other, the pictures by Italian Renaissance painters—Correggio, Bronzino, Parmigianino—which are outstanding as regards quality but not number, and, finally, the eighteenth-century Venetian *vedute*, including Bellotto's thirteen views of Vienna—then the result is already a most varied and remarkable ensemble. Yet a distinctive feature would be missing if we were to forget one of the Gallery's chief attractions, the group of Spanish portraits centring round Velázquez's famous pictures of Philip IV and his children.

The evolution of the Vienna Gallery is revealed in this "personal" quality, which it shares with another European museum, the Prado at Madrid. Both collections are the work of the Habsburg family, and both took about four hundred years to assemble. Almost every generation made its contribution in accordance with the taste of the times and the judgement and fancy of individual princes. Though a real history of the Vienna Gallery would often have to mention several different people in connection with a single period, four must in any case be given special prominence. Firstly, there was Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol (1529–95), the founder of the Ambras collection. While it is true that his artistic taste was to some extent dominated by his interest in history, the Vienna Gallery none-the-less owes some very important pictures to him. Next came Ferdinand's nephew, Emperor Rudolph II (1552–1612), who turned his palace on the Hradčany at Prague into a repository of extremely choice works of art. Rudolph was at least as interested in acquiring pictures by Dürer and other great German artists as those of Correggio and Parmigianino, which corresponded to the taste of his time. Beyond this, however, he promoted among his Court Painters, through his requirements as their patron, a style moulded by his own personal fancy. Next, there followed Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614–62), the brother of Emperor Ferdinand III. During the years he spent as governor of the Spanish Netherlands (1647–56), he assembled a collection that was among the most important in Europe at that date, and it forms the basis of the present Gallery. Along with Venetian paintings, then the most sought after by collectors, it included pictures by Flemish and Dutch contemporaries of the Duke, Early German works and, above all, paintings by the Early Netherlandish artists from Jan van Eyck to Bruegel. Finally, mention must be made of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–80), under whom the great paintings by Rubens and Van Dyck were bought. Though only the chief

events in its historical development have, of course, been indicated here, it is they that have given the collection of the Vienna Gallery its most important and distinctive features.

Not only did Leopold Wilhelm and Maria Theresa both contribute notably to the expansion of the collection, but they also played a decisive part in the founding of the Gallery as such and its arrangement at Vienna. After Leopold Wilhelm's collection, which the Duke left to his nephew Emperor Leopold II, had been transferred to the capital, it was eventually housed and displayed in the Stallburg wing of the Imperial Palace. There, a very accurate inventory was prepared in 1659 which, with its later additions, constitutes one of our principle sources of information about the Gallery's history. The Stallburg arrangement was changed more than once; during the seventeen-twenties Emperor Charles VI had it reorganized on purely decorative lines in the then fashionable manner. How the pictures were disposed is known from the miniatures that A. Storffer painted on vellum of each separate wall of the display rooms in three precious volumes (1720, 1730, 1733). These rooms were really Late Baroque state apartments, for which the pictures served simply as ornament; but, later, Maria Theresa's extensive purchases made it necessary to find a larger building to accommodate the collection. The choice of the Empress, who successfully set about reorganizing the Imperial Treasury and Habsburg art possessions in general, fell on the Belvedere Palace. At her wish, all the pictures were united in the Upper Belvedere and for the first time displayed chronologically according to schools. Substantial additions came from the Treasury, the Hofburg, the various castles, and the hitherto unused "reserve stock", which right up to very recent times has continued to be a rich source of supply. The year 1781, during which the public was first allowed access to the Belvedere collection, may be regarded as the time when the Vienna Gallery was really born, and in 1783 appeared the first true catalogue. During the disturbances of the Napoleonic Wars, measures were taken to safeguard the collection. In 1805 the greater part of it went to Hungary, but in 1809 only the pieces that could be easily transported were removed, which explains why it was possible for the French to pillage the Gallery on a considerable scale during that year. It is true that most of the works removed to France were returned in 1815, but some masterpieces have remained there. In 1891, the Gallery was transferred from the Upper Belvedere to the first floor of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, which Emperor Franz Joseph I had built on the Burgring in order to unite the entire artistic heritage of the house of Habsburg in a worthy setting.

The Gallery's new home contains enough space for the display of about eight hundred pictures—roughly a tenth of the total entrusted to the direction. Naturally, only works of high or the highest quality could be included among those on exhibition; the hundred reproduced here in colour were chosen from among these after long and careful consideration, according to principles suggested by the Gallery's history. In the first place, account had to be taken of the world-famous masterpieces; then, there was the strong claim of the group of pictures that give the Gallery its individuality; and lastly, the rich variety of the collection had to be made apparent. Almost without exception, however, it has proved possible to harmonize these three requirements. Even though, when the works were being selected, little thought was at first given to creating equal groups, the final result is a remarkable balance both between the various types of subject and between the collection's two great divisions, the one including the paintings from Italy and other Latin countries, the other those produced north of the Alps.

The text that accompanies the plates is intended to make it easier for the reader to contemplate the pictures, by bringing together as many as possible of the facts that it is useful or necessary to know about them. Besides this, however, it is hoped that through prompting him to examine the works thoroughly they will also impress on him how much effort and sympathy are required to get the most out of a picture, which can never wholly reveal itself to a hasty, superficial inspection.

VINZENZ OBERHAMMER

PART ONE
NORTHERN EUROPE

PLATE I

MASTER OF HEILIGENKREUZ

French School(?), active at the beginning of the fifteenth century

THE ANNUNCIATION

Oak, 72 × 43.5 cm. (28³/₈ × 16¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 6524

The Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz in Lower Austria was founded in 1135–36 by Margrave Leopold III the Pious, a member of the Babenberg dynasty. His youngest son Otto, who became Bishop of Freising and achieved great fame as the author of a universal history, had been the moving force behind the establishment of the Cistercians in Austria. Indeed, so much had he admired the organization of the order, while visiting Paris as a student, that he had actually entered it in France, together with his attendants. As a result, the first members of the Heiligenkreuz community came from Morimond, in Champagne, where Otto was then abbot. The nucleus of the medieval monastery has largely survived to the present day. But the old furnishings from both church and monastery have almost entirely disappeared.

An exception is formed by an "Annunciation" and a "Mystic Marriage of St Catherine", on the back of which, against now badly damaged dull blue backgrounds, appear respectively a standing figure of the Virgin with the infant Christ and one of St Dorothy with the basket of flowers and martyr's palm. These two double-sided panels, which are known to have been in the monastery at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were bought by the Vienna Gallery in 1926. At first glance, they might be taken for the wings of a dismembered triptych, but this hypothesis is excluded by the compositional unity that the artist has painstakingly imposed on the two scenes. Conforming to the courtly spirit of the age, the angel of the Annunciation on bended knee presents his message in the form of a sealed letter. Behind the Virgin's throne appears a church under construction, on which two angel builders are moving a heavy section of cornice—clearly a reference to the *lapis angularis* or corner-stone mentioned in the Bible. This structure is continued across the picture by a balustrade decorated with a carpet, behind which stand St Paul and St James. And it extends unchanged into the second scene, where St Dorothy and St Barbara correspond to the male saints, and the kneeling St Catherine matches Gabriel. Even in the colour, the panels show so many points of similarity that the effect of their immediate juxtaposition is almost harsh, and still leaves some room for doubt as to the original arrangement.

The problem of their source is still more difficult. Agreement has more or less been reached only about the courtly, international Gothic character of the paintings, which means that they were executed round about 1400, but does not help to establish where. Though Austrian and German scholars were at first inclined to regard them as products of Viennese court art, our increasing knowledge of Austrian painting and the growing body of works attributed to the anonymous Master of Heiligenkreuz make this seem more and more doubtful. The slender figures, the soft drapery with its broad folds, the peculiar, finical elegance, certain costume details such as St Catherine's dress, the expressive gestures of the hands with their excessively long fingers, the costly fabrics and crowns—none of these suggest a local provenance. Instead, they seem increasingly to point to France, particularly in view of the ties maintained between Cistercian houses and the homeland of the order. However, attempts to narrow the field down to Provence, Paris, or the Burgundian court have found little support even among French scholars. Another very important component of European civilization in the Gothic period, Austria's neighbour Bohemia, has hardly come under consideration at all.

There are few works that have so successfully hidden their nationality from researchers, and that mingle such varied characteristics of different European art centres in such a remarkable and elusive way that they constitute a new unity. Yet it is precisely this that makes the two Heiligenkreuz panels so special, and sets them among the most characteristic examples of the international Gothic style.





PLATE 2

JAN VAN EYCK

*Born c. 1390 perhaps at Maaseyck, died 1441 at Bruges**CARDINAL NICCOLÒ ALBERGATI*Oak, 34.1 × 27.3 cm. (13³/₈ × 10¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 975

Niccolò Albergati, here portrayed so convincingly, was born in 1375 at Bologna. A member of a distinguished middle-class family there, he entered the Carthusian order at the age of twenty, became Prior of San Gerolamo (outside Bologna) in 1406, and the following year was made both Prior of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme at Rome and Procurator-general of his order. From 1409 to 1416, he was Rector of Santissima Trinità at Mantua, and then once again Prior at Bologna until becoming Bishop there in March 1417. In 1426, Pope Martin v appointed him Cardinal, his titular church being Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. Extolled as a model cleric, he was also entrusted by the Holy See with many weighty and arduous political missions. Thus, in 1431, the Pope sent him to the courts of France, England, and Burgundy as a mediator in the negotiations that lead to the Treaty of Arras in 1435.

It was on this visit to Burgundian territory (October to December 1431) that Albergati was portrayed by Jan van Eyck, almost certainly at the behest of Duke Philip the Good, to whom Jan was then Court Painter. The picture may have been painted at Lille, where the artist was actually living, at Bruges, where he had bought a house during the relevant year, or at Ghent, where he was still working on the great altarpiece begun by his brother. Albergati only paid brief visits to these cities, however, and his time was precious; so, as usual in such cases, Jan had to be content with just making a drawing of his sitter from life. This, executed in silverpoint, is now preserved in the Dresden Print Room. At first glance, the drawing seems more direct and lively than the painting, and the subject's character comes out even more strongly in every little observation, as well as in the ensemble. Such is the nature of drawing, which, with all the necessary reservations, is like taking a snapshot. Yet any one who failed to see how far the painting surpasses the silverpoint in other respects would be grossly misjudging both of them. In actual fact, Jan suppressed only a few of the details recorded in his drawing, while almost everything else has become more firmly and clearly formulated. The forehead is now less sloping, more impressive; the line of the hair at the temple is more sharply stressed, and looks stiffer, particularly in contrast to the soft, ruffled down on top; the eyes are more lively, the brows a trifle more arched; the ear appears even more delicately moulded, while the chin stands out a little more strongly. Taking the head as a whole, only in the painting does it acquire the universal, enduring human qualities that carry it beyond the momentary image of a snapshot. Compared with the drawing, the painted head, with its lucid modelling, has a positively chiselled look, so that the red, ermine-trimmed cape seems to become its pedestal.

Jan provided the silverpoint with a whole series of very detailed colour notes. In so far as they are still decipherable, these read approximately: "...the forehead... fresh tones and the nose sanguine, in the hair pale luminosity, purple warts, eyes... black all around... yellow-brown and bluish-white... the contours rather luminous white... at the sides... the lips very whitish... purple, the stubble very greyish... very soft... reddish." One can see how acutely the artist observed his sitter, and how often his words hit on the essential, as in the reference to the "very whitish lips" and "pale luminosity" in the hair. For the most part, it is a question of nuances that only appear in the Vienna portrait as very soft, delicate tonal gradations, since the paint has been applied with such extraordinary transparency. In the ensemble, the bright yellow-brown of the face predominates, effectively harmonizing with the dark-blue of the background and red of the cape.

The panel is first referred to in the 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm's collection as No. 109: "A portrait in oil on wood of the Cardinal of Sancta Cruce by Johann van Eckh." In Storffer's painted "inventory" of the new Stallburg arrangement of the Imperial gallery (vol. 3; 1733), the work appears as a tondo with the corners cut off—though these have since been restored. At that date, it was attributed to Quentin Massys, and only in the nineteenth century did the earlier ascription return to favour. The picture was then, however, considered to be a representation in old age of Jodocus Vyt, whom Jan immortalized so magnificently in the male donor figure on the Ghent Altarpiece. However little Albergati and Vyt resemble one another as men, stylistically the two portraits are very close, and belong in fact to the same period.



PLATE 3

NETHERLANDISH SCHOOL

*Mid-fifteenth century**GONELLA, JESTER AT THE FERRARESE COURT*Oak, 36 × 24 cm. (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.) Inv. No. 1840

In his *Geschichte der Hofnarren* (1789), Karl Friedrich Flögel described Gonella as one of the most famous fifteenth-century jesters, employed by Niccolò III d'Este and his son Borso; but is he really the subject of the Vienna picture? The identification goes back to an entry in the 1659 inventory: "A small portrait in oil on wood of the jester Jonella with very close-trimmed beard and red cap, in a red and yellow garment. An original by Johannis Bellinus in the style of Albrecht Dürer." This attribution is probably due to the picture's supposed Italian provenance, made likely by the recently announced discovery of a copy, executed round about 1600, in a private collection at Ferrara. This bears the inscription: "The true portrait of Gonella." However, the Ferrarese tradition regarding Gonella is highly confused, and the stories told about his pranks—apparently first collected and published in 1585—actually refer not to one, but to three jesters. The first is said to have lived at the court of Obizzo d'Este (died 1352), another served Niccolò III (1393–1441), while a third is recorded in the household of Borso (1450–71). At Ferrara, the name "Gonella" may in time have come simply to mean "jester", thus leading to the creation of a legendary figure.

It has often been doubted whether the picture represents a jester at all. The figure has been called a peasant or an old shepherd, and the panel a genre painting—which at first glance the staunch yet sly boorishness of the subject appears to justify. Yet the costume is undoubtedly that of a jester: a coarse white shirt under a waistcoat made up of vertical strips of yellow, green, and red material, which are joined together by wool braiding in various hues. The huge, pompon-like buttons are also different colours, and, like the little bell at the corner of the collar, this variegated effect is typical of jesters. At that date, moreover, it was not the custom to portray peasants or shepherds. Nevertheless, the figure's look and bearing remain surprising, though Tomaso Garzoni, writing in the second half of the sixteenth century, helps to explain them: "Any court seems diminished and deficient where a Carafulla, a Gonella, or a Boccafresca is not to be heard or seen in the chair entertaining with stories, jokes, witticisms, frivolities, and mockery the distinguished audience that sits around him... he recites the rustic testimonies of 'Beardy' Mangone and Pedrazzo... discourses upon law like a Gratianus of Bologna, talks about medicine like a Master Grillus, holds forth pedantically like a Fidentius Glocrisius, acts like a Bergamask for all he is worth as though he were the foremost peasant in the valley... and mimics every one in speech and dress. Now... hunching his shoulders, he looks like the Baboon of Milan, now turning out his arms, he looks a very paragon of piety."

If one imagines such a character, one can hardly doubt that the Vienna panel represents a jester in action, playing his most popular rôle of homely peasant, unshaven and rather blear-eyed. Which and whose jester is depicted remains, however, unexplained. At this point, only art historians can carry the matter further, though up to now the opinions voiced have been highly varied. That the little panel is not Italian, as the 1659 inventory asserts, but by a Netherlandish artist under Jan van Eyck's influence, was recognized as long ago as 1881, when the work was exhibited for the first time in the Belvedere. Subsequently, a succession of experts tried to connect it with Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his school, but very soon it was returned to its place round about the middle of the fifteenth century within the circle of Jan van Eyck. Expressed as broadly as this, the judgement today finds no opponents. There is, however, a group of scholars who claim the picture to be by Van Eyck himself; but it has a sturdier, coarser look than those portraits universally attributed to Jan, so that one cannot accept this ascription without reserve.



PLATE 4

ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN

*Born c. 1400 at Tournai, died 1464 at Brussels**ALTARPIECE WITH THE CRUCIFIXION AND TWO DONORS*Oak, Central panel 101 × 70 cm. (39³/₄ × 27¹/₂ in.) Inv. No. 901

The Vienna Gallery contains two important works by Rogier van der Weyden, who already during his own lifetime was regarded even in Italy as the greatest Northern artist after Jan van Eyck, and who had by far the most influence on the subsequent development of all panel painting. The first, from his early period, was painted with miniature-like delicacy while he was still working at Tournai, clearly under the influence of the Master of Flémalle (Robert Campin). It consists of two little panels that once formed a diptych: a Virgin, with the infant Christ at her breast, standing before a throne in an elegantly painted stone setting; and a St Catherine depicted against an exquisite landscape. The other work, the altarpiece with the "Crucifixion", dates from about 1440, when Rogier had already been City Painter at Brussels for several years.

Both the slender wing panels have an imitation frame painted on them in gold, with modelling hatched in black, so it is certain that the central panel (cut at some stage, then partly restored) once had one as well. These fake frames, and especially the fact that the lateral panels are too narrow to cover the central part completely, lead one to suppose that the work was originally conceived as a fixed altarpiece, even though divided up like one with movable wings. Furthermore, it has been composed in the form of a closely knit pictorial whole. As with the Van Eycks' Ghent Altarpiece, this perhaps becomes most strongly apparent in the way the three panels are firmly bound together by a broad, hilly landscape, which here continues behind the frames not just at the horizon, but also in the fissured terrain of the foreground.

This unified effect is heightened by the disposition of the blue-black mourning angels, but above all by that of the figures below. Though isolated on the wings and differentiated from the other participants, the Magdalene with her jar of ointment and St Veronica holding the Sudarium still link up with the central panel through being arranged in the same plane as the two male figures at the foot of the cross. The way Rogier has introduced the donor couple into the main scene on an almost equal footing with the holy figures is something entirely new. They have, however, been kept apart from the cross by the unbroken view through to the landscape beyond, and this severance is further emphasized by the crack in the ground, which separates them from the Virgin.

The four figures around the cross—the men behind, the women in front—are connected, with great tension, by means of diagonals. After the calm prelude of the Magdalene's restrained sorrow, the grief flares up on the central panel, expressed in the agitated figures of St John and the Virgin and in Christ's fluttering loin-cloth. Then, after the caesura, it begins to die down in the male donor, who is not quite so directly involved, and it is finally extinguished in the conventional pose of his wife, who, despite her air of self-controlled gravity, seems inwardly to be hardly moved. On the right wing, St Veronica forms a coda in a series of firm, almost stiff verticals.

The "Crucifixion" was already in Leopold Wilhelm's collection at Brussels. With the collection, it passed to Vienna where, in the 1659 inventory, it was listed among the German and Netherlandish pictures as No. 13, the work of an unknown Flemish artist. There is, however, no record of its having been subsequently in either the Stallburg or the Treasury, and it did not reappear until 1780, when it entered the Belvedere as a work by "Martin Schön" (Schongauer). It was not attributed to Rogier until a century later.





PLATE 5

HUGO VAN DER GOES

Born c. 1440 at Ghent, died 1482 in the Roode Clooster near Brussels

THE FALL OF MAN

Oak, 33.8 × 23 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 9 in.) Inv. No. 5822a

This little panel is the left half of a diptych, and with its companion, a "Lamentation", it shows the Fall and Redemption of Man. When closed, the work formerly revealed on the outside, as on the front cover of a book, a grisaille representation of a stone niche containing the statue of a female saint clad in drapery with rich, Sluteresque folds. This has now been separated, and is exhibited on its own. The saint stands upon a cushion-shaped pedestal, reading a book, as a little devil tries to blow out the candle in her left hand. Below the niche, an inscription identifies her as St Genevieve, while in the spandrels above the pointed arch appear reliefs showing the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and Cain murdering his brother. From written sources, it is known that on the back of the "Lamentation" there was once an escutcheon with a black eagle. Today, this picture has almost entirely disappeared, except for a strip along the bottom edge, which shows a meadow with plants hardly less delicately painted than those on the inside, and also the bare feet of two men. One was apparently standing, the other kneeling, and obviously they were supporters.

In the "Fall of Man", Hugo has very clearly revealed his admiration for Jan van Eyck; but it is the admiration of one who has come to learn, not to copy. Whereas Jan was fond of continuing his landscapes infinitely into the distance, here the natural surroundings are precisely delimited. Paradise extends like a park towards the background by way of the continuous succession of bushes and clumps of trees, across the highly varied greens of dappled meadows up to the brow of the hill, which forms a strong contour at the horizon. On the right, too, a clear-cut boundary is provided by the blue ridge of distant mountains, which look like the prototype of a Giorgionesque motif. The figures have been placed in the foreground, with Eve, who has the leading rôle, at the centre; like an arrow, the blue iris points up at her. Particularly towards the left, her outline echoes that of the Eve depicted forty years earlier on the Ghent Altarpiece. Now, however, she is not squeezed into a narrow niche, and her body turns more directly towards the spectator, standing out luminously against the foil of her hair, which flows in soft waves almost to the ground. The drama of the Fall is suggested by the eloquent decline in stature of the figures, from the tall, calm, upright Adam, via the restless Eve, to the small twisting serpent, with a woman's head and an iridescent body coloured like some deadly fungus.

To this luxuriant garden of Eden and its eternally blue sky, the right half of the diptych opposes a barren Golgotha overhung by grey, menacing clouds. Yet here, too, it is basically the highly skilled blending of a strong surface emphasis with a stepped arrangement of overlapping forms leading into depth that gives the subject its new and passionate immediacy. In the foreground of the "Lamentation", two meditating figures assure the stability of the group, which is otherwise vehemently agitated. It draws its life from the violent impact of two slanting lines, the one established by Christ's body, the other, at right angles to it, descending from the left by way of a double line of heads to meet the first in the head of Christ. Whether one looks at all these heads as horizontal or vertical pairs, as straight rows or a zigzag, as a surface pattern or a succession leading into depth, each view reveals new, intensely emotional relationships, and yields more psychological information.

The Vienna diptych is one of Hugo's earliest works, dating from about 1467-68. It belonged to Leopold Wilhelm, and, in the 1659 inventory of the Duke's collection, it is recorded as still being in its original frame of gilded wood. Perhaps already dismembered, it was transferred to Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck, from whence the "Lamentation" returned to Vienna in 1780, for display in the Upper Belvedere. Along with the rest of the Ambras collection, the "Fall of Man" and "St Genevieve" were moved to the Lower Belvedere in 1804. Subsequently, the panels were ascribed to Memlinc, and not until after they had entered the Vienna Gallery's new home on the Burg was their author correctly identified.



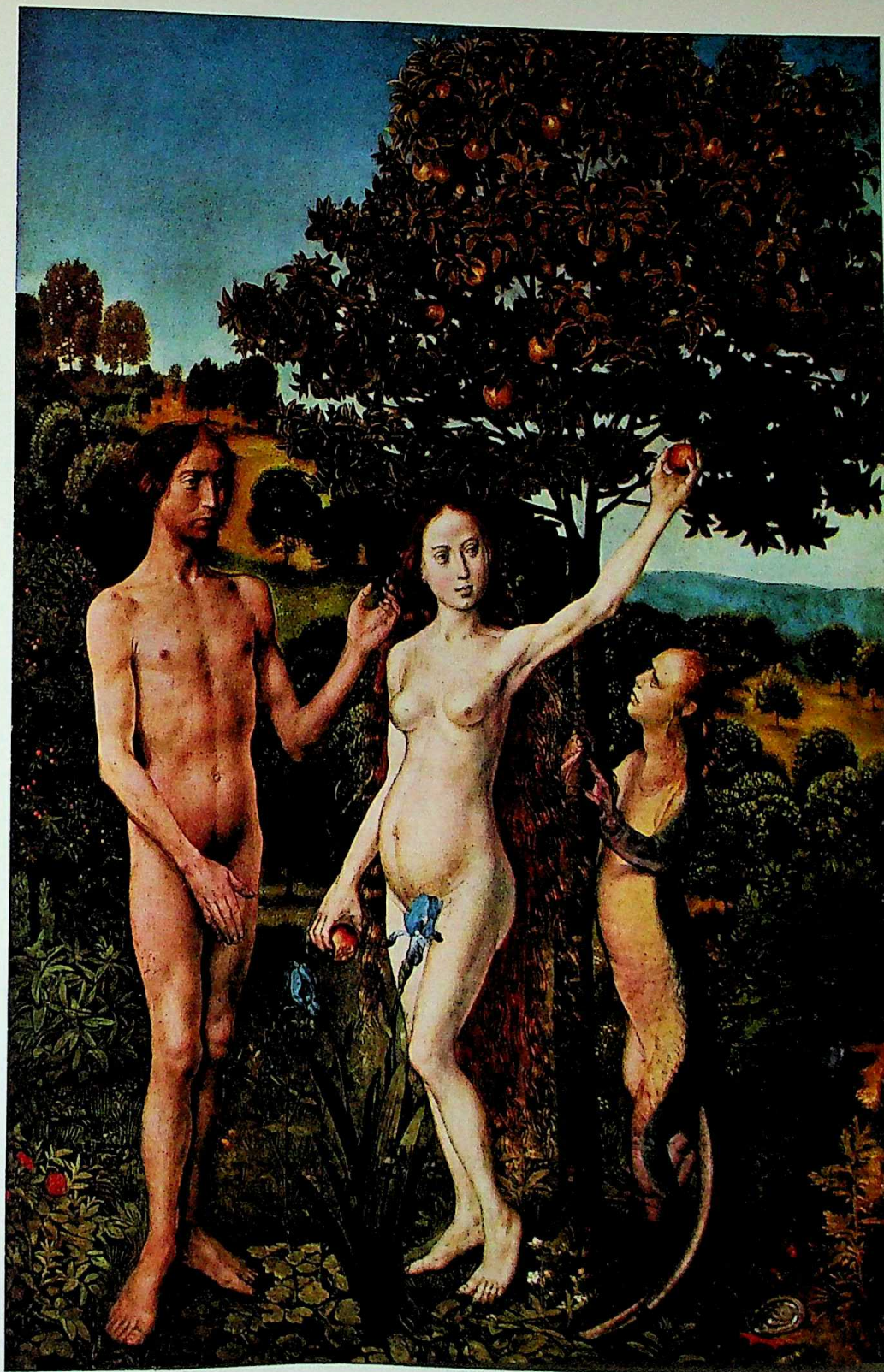


PLATE 7

GEERTGEN TOT SINT JANS

Born c. 1460-65 at Leyden, died c. 1490 at Haarlem

THE LAMENTATION

Oak, 175 × 139 cm. (68⁷/₈ × 54³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 991

There is hardly a single painter of note about whose life we know as little as that of Geertgen tot Sint Jans. According to Van Mander in his *Schilderboek* (1604), Geertgen died at Haarlem when aged about twenty-eight. From the same, not wholly reliable source, we learn that, in Haarlem, the artist lived with the Brethren of St John, without actually belonging to the order; hence his name, which means "little Gerard of the Monastery of St John". Another source gives Leyden as his birthplace, but the dates of his birth and death can only be deduced approximately. The two sources do, however, agree in regarding a triptych originally on the high altar of the Brethren's church at Haarlem as Geertgen's masterpiece; and, apart from a view of the church of St Bavo, Haarlem, traditionally regarded as his, it is the only work connected with him on other than purely stylistic grounds.

The Vienna "Lamentation" and another panel, also in the Gallery, representing the fate of St John the Baptist's bones, formed the front and back of the right wing of this altarpiece, which, again according to Van Mander, had a "Crucifixion" at its centre. From the measurements of the surviving parts, it can be calculated that, when open, the whole triptych was nearly six metres wide—almost the breadth of Hugo van der Goes's Portinari Altarpiece. In fact it was one of the largest altarpieces in Early Netherlandish art, and the Vienna panels, peaks of fifteenth-century painting, wholly justify Van Mander's eulogy of the "big, splendid work".

For his "Lamentation", Geertgen employed a mode of composition used by Hugo van der Goes in his small, early representation of the same subject, dating from before 1470 (see Plate 5). Again we find single figures or groups almost symmetrically arranged at the sides to give the necessary stability to the picture—and especially to the agitated main action. Here, the resemblance between the diagonal along which all but one of the other principal figures are aligned and the oblique in Hugo's composition is even more striking. Certain details reveal magnificent inventiveness: not only does the Virgin's white head-dress respond to the Magdalene's movement, but it effectively links the mother to her dead son, depicted with horrifying realism. His body appears pale and luminous against the white winding-sheet, as his chest thrusts forward and head falls back upon the Virgin's knees. In the middle of the picture, St John with his big red cloak attracts our attention, and guides our eye in the direction of his own gaze, towards the bearded and richly dressed figure of Joseph of Arimathea. This has been taken from another of Hugo's works, the Monforte Altarpiece now at Berlin, just as the Magdalene comes from Rogier van der Weyden's Madrid "Deposition". Moreover, the whole way of composing and above all the grandeur of the language, which was then entirely new in the northern Netherlands, strongly attest to contact with the great Flemish painters of the times. Geertgen none-the-less remained a true Hollander in the relative calmness of his figures, their peaceful coexistence, the extent of his realism, and his sober observation. Besides all these qualities, an outstanding gift for narration is revealed by the subsidiary scene on Golgotha.

The work's north-Netherlandish character comes out perhaps even more clearly and purely in the panel showing the Evangelist's bones being burned, and the rescue of some of them by Knights of St John. For explicit documentary reasons, the fact that five knights are represented indicates a date during the years round about 1490. Furthermore, in 1484 the Grand Master of the order had acquired from the Turks on Rhodes a highly valuable relic consisting of the bones of the saint's right arm and hand. These can be seen in Geertgen's picture, which must therefore have been executed after the important event, again round about 1490. Van Mander states that the altarpiece was destroyed during the iconoclastic riots or else when the Spaniards laid siege to Haarlem. Perhaps it was no mere accident that the only part to be saved was the wing with the portraits on it. When Van Mander saw the Vienna pictures, they had already been separated, and this is probably the earliest example of the operation in the history of art. At that date, they were with the Commander of the order of St John, "in the assembly room of the new building", but in 1635 they belonged to Charles I, a gift from the United Provinces. When, after the King's execution in 1649, Cromwell put the royal collection up to auction, Geertgen's paintings were among those that came under the hammer. Leopold Wilhelm probably acquired them then, but in any case they were noted and described in the 1659 inventory of his collection. Like nearly all the Gothic pictures, they only reappeared in 1781, when the Imperial gallery was established in the Upper Belvedere.



PLATE 8

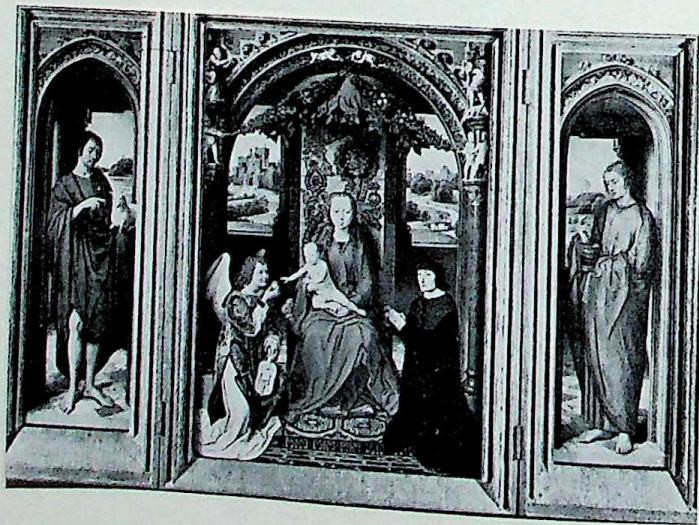
HANS MEMLINC

*Born c. 1433 at Seligenstadt near Frankfurt-am-Main, died 1494 at Bruges**ALTARPIECE WITH THE VIRGIN AND TWO ST JOHNS*Oak, Central panel 69×47 cm. ($27\frac{1}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{2}$ in.) Wings (inside) 64×18.5 cm. ($25\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in.); (outside) 69.3×17.3 cm. ($27\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Inv. Nos. 939, 943, 994 A and B

The central panel of this small triptych presents, in an architectural setting, the Virgin enthroned with the infant Christ, an angel to the left and the donor to the right. On the wings appear, outside, figures of Adam and Eve and, inside, St John the Baptist with the lamb and St John the Evangelist with the chalice. The saints are linked to the central scene in a unified space by the architecture, the perspective, and the landscape. Memlinc took over many of these motifs from his predecessors and even from his own earlier works. For example, the idea of the setting goes back to Rogier van der Weyden, but in the general arrangement Memlinc has repeated an altarpiece, now at Chatsworth, that he himself painted for Sir John Donne of Kidwelly. The Baptist figure, too, almost exactly follows its forerunner on the Donne Triptych, as does the angel with the violin, who is handing Christ an apple. Such borrowings and repetitions are typical of the artist, who was not a fanatical innovator and researcher like Hugo van der Goes. Apart from his important and fruitful contribution to portraiture, Memlinc served the development of painting chiefly by bringing together all the great accomplishments of the previous generation and merging them in a unified style. Instead of the agitated forms produced by most of his contemporaries, he aimed at a calm, balanced language, consonant with the spirit of the Early Renaissance—and the Vienna altarpiece provides one of the most beautiful and characteristic examples of it. This new direction is especially apparent on the wings, where violent perspective and the disturbance caused by more than one view through into the open have been avoided. In the “niches”, all has become quite still, and the two saints, who on the Donne Triptych are wholly dissimilar, now form counterparts in a symmetry that controls even the landscape views.

For the evolution of art, however, the Adam and Eve on the backs of the wings are much more important, and like Hugo's (see Plate 5), they call for comparison with those by Jan van Eyck on the Ghent Altarpiece. As there, the two Progenitors stand in stone niches, but Memlinc has taken the bold step of making them the only decoration on the outside of the triptych. Moreover, it is significant that, while there are several replicas of the central panel, none are known to exist of the two nudes. Already in his “Fall of Man”, Hugo van der Goes had begun to liberate the figures from Jan's nearly profile view, though this still tends to hide the lower part of their bodies. Memlinc, however, freed them completely, so that they confront the spectator, unimpeded by their narrow niches.

Memlinc painted the altarpiece for two different donors, both unknown. Under the young gentleman dressed in black, radiographs have revealed an older, more dignified man, with a wrinkled face. His many rings and richly ornamented Gothic crosier characterize him as a dignitary of the Church. Perhaps this cleric's untimely death caused Memlinc to use the triptych for another client, simply painting in the new portrait, which appears to be authentic. This is another altarpiece that goes back to Leopold Wilhelm's collection. When the 1659 inventory was made, it had already been dismembered. The four wing picture had been sawn apart and reassembled in pairs, so that the two St Johns appeared on one side, Adam and Eve on the other. Jan van Eyck is named in the inventory as the presumed author of the panels, which were not subsequently displayed in the Stallburg. They only reappeared in the Upper Belvedere gallery, the 1783 catalogue of which ascribes them to Hugo van der Goes. Not until a century later was the correct attribution made, and in 1931 an attempt was made to restore the little altarpiece to its original condition.



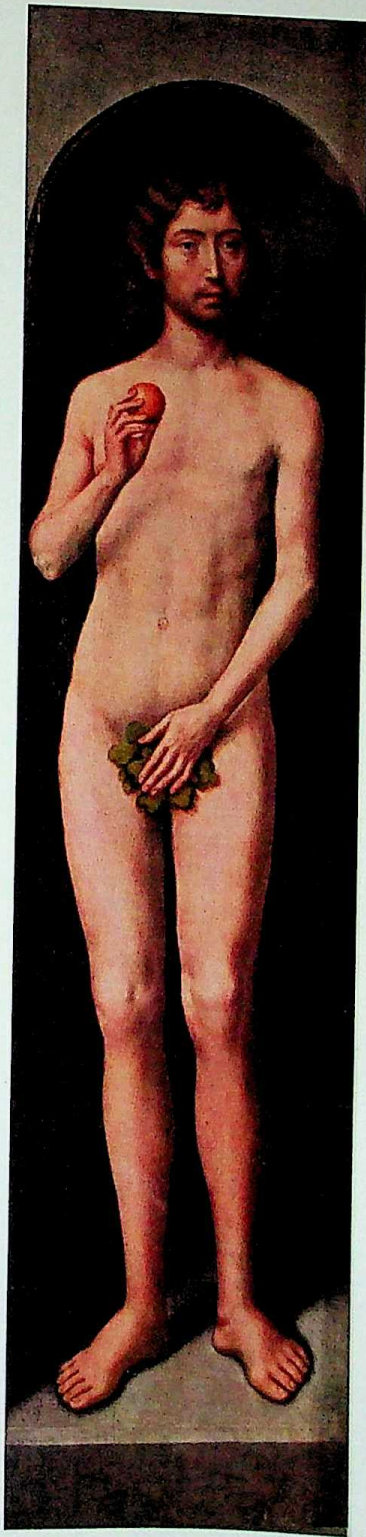


PLATE 9

GERARD DAVID

Born c. 1460 at Oudewater near Gouda, died 1523 at Bruges

THE ST MICHAEL ALTARPIECE

Oak, Central panel 66×53 cm. ($26 \times 20\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Wings 66×22.5 cm. ($26 \times 8\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 4056

This little altarpiece is of special interest because it has the unusual distinction of remaining quite intact within its modest original frame, which has only been slightly restored.

On the central panel, the archangel Michael is seen fighting the fallen angels, who are being driven down into hell. Seven of them crawl out from under his cope, tugging at it as they go, and they undoubtedly represent the Seven Deadly Sins. Several of them are clearly recognizable: the bird-headed creature on the right trying to beautify itself with the archangel's cope is certainly Pride, while above it, emerging from the shade of an arch-like fold, can be seen the huge, lolling head of Sloth. On St Michael's right, the loathsome monster parading its backside, hairless tail, and hooves, instead of its head and arms, could stand for Lust; the green demon with spinous head and glaring eyes, grasping at a chunk of rock, may perhaps be interpreted as Anger. As is often the case, the remaining three cannot be precisely identified.

Everything is pointed and prickly, or hard and keen-edged in this battle scene, whether one considers St Michael's wings, his shield, his bluish white alb with its sharply broken folds, or the devils at his feet and those behind him, swarming like insects in the sky. On the other hand, the lovely cloud amid which God the Father appears in a golden gloriole recalls the great Danubian masters of cloud and atmospheric painting, Altdorfer and Wolf Huber, who at about this time were producing their pictures dominated by nature. David, to whom we owe some of the most beautiful and sensitive representations of woods—as well as the first pure landscapes—in Netherlandish art, has here created a terrain out of nothing but rock and stone. It is a bleak and terrible desert, from which everything that grows—even the tiniest blade of grass—has been banished.

On the wings of the triptych appear St Jerome with the lion and St Anthony of Padua with the book, on which a little child kneels in prayer—probably the saint's vision of the infant Christ. Here, the backgrounds are specially noteworthy, because the barren waste of the central panel, which marks the entrance to hell, gradually comes to life, and, towards the outer edges, turns into a beautiful romantic landscape.

The powerful movement of St Michael is rather unusual for David, who was born in Holland, and who may have been trained at Haarlem, before settling in Bruges as Memlinc's disciple and heir. For the archangel figure, the painter borrowed extensively from an engraving, now only preserved in copies, by the Master of the Playing-cards, who was active about 1430–50. Many of the devils also go back to this print.

The picture visible on the outside of the wings when closed is much more typical of David, who, continuing and developing Memlinc's "classic" tendency, aimed to give his compositions a self-contained unity, his forms a calm, intrinsic purity, and grew increasingly economical and refined in his choice of means. Beneath the shallow arch of a single stone-niche appear, on the left, a bearded man in shining armour and a green cloak, with an arrow in his right hand and a large bow in his left; and, on the right, a young woman in a stylish red dress, a dark grey mantle, and a white coif, leading a little boy dressed in orange, with two nails from the cross in his hand. No doubt these represent saints, but they look so real and alive that one would sooner believe they were portraits. The beautiful play of light and shadow in the niche, obviously derived from Memlinc (see Plate 8), and the magical atmosphere enveloping the figures have fused to create a new, resonant colour harmony, which clearly indicates that the triptych belongs to the artist's late period.

David's altarpiece was not acquired by the Gallery until 1886, when it was bought in Vienna for 20,000 guilders (florins) at the sale of the art dealer August Artaria's stock. Previously it had been in the collection of the Bavarian Privy Councillor, Adamovitz, who is supposed to have obtained it from Bavaria.

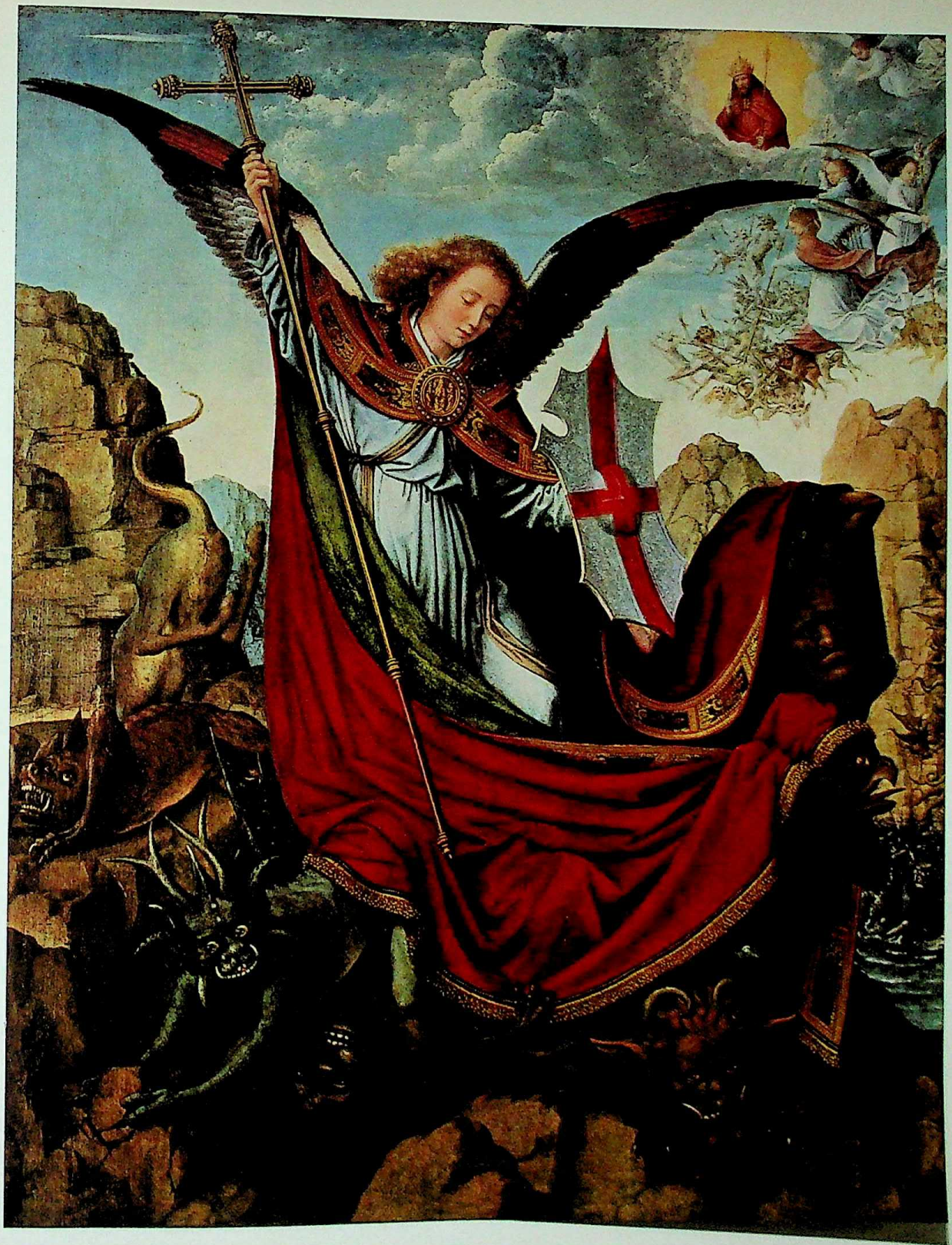


PLATE IO

JOACHIM DE PATINIER

Born c. 1480 at Bouvignes or Dinant, died 1524 at Antwerp

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Oak, 59.5 × 77 cm. (23³/₈ × 30³/₈ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 981

In the "Baptism of Christ", the Vienna Gallery possesses one of the few pictures signed by the artist in full. The formal inscription—OPVS. JOACHIM. D. PATINIER—on the rock in the foreground, together with the, for Patinier, larger than usual dimensions, allow no doubt as to its being a major work.

Five sixths of the picture surface are taken up by the landscape, leaving only a narrow strip for the sky. In point of fact, Patinier, whom Dürer already described as a good landscape artist, is considered one of the founders of this type of painting, even though he is recognized as having been a close follower of David, whose landscapes in their turn link up with those of Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Whereas Geertgen's landscapes, though still backgrounds, become settings for little subsidiary scenes, and whereas David produced the first pure landscapes, Patinier really immersed his figures and figure groups in their natural surroundings, which he united very closely with his biblical subject-matter.

Conforming to the old custom, the Vienna panel shows two distinct events within a single setting: in the foreground appears the actual Baptism, while in the middle distance, on the left, St John can be seen preaching. Here, Patinier has kept very close to the text from St Luke's Gospel (III, 12 ff.): "Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man..." Here the soldiers, standing at the back of the group, appear to have just put their question, as several of the audience are turning towards them. Beyond the soldiers, however, the figure of Christ, clad in blue, emerges from a clump of bushes, and evidently the Baptist is pointing at him. The whole multicoloured assembly has been planted very firmly and securely on the grass at the edge of the wood; but this scene is cut in two by a lean tree-trunk, which leads the eye back to the foreground, where Christ's mantle isolates a small patch of dark earth. On it, near the base of the trunk, only a thistle and a variety of creeping things are to be seen. Who could miss the symbolism of this tree!

Almost exactly in the centre of the foreground and face to face with the beholder, the figure of Christ rises up out of the glassy water, his luminous whiteness contrasting with the brown-clad Baptist. Yet it is above all from the breadth and grandeur of the landscape that the biblical event gains its due solemnity and dramatic tension. Besides the river's progress towards the background, there is a very orderly diagonal gradation of structural elements into depth, which gives the landscape, in conjunction with the main figures, a positive, dynamic rôle in the picture. First come the roots of the dead tree, in the bottom left-hand corner; then comes Christ's blue mantle; next St John; then the stepped formation of the craggy mountain, at the foot of which appears the entrance to the Baptist's cave, approached by an avenue of trees; beyond, the pale white rock with the ruin; then the grey needle, which also marks the bend in the Jordan; and finally, on the far bank, the old watch-tower atop a rocky hill. Probably there is some truth in the belief that the bold, savage forms of the crags, the white satellite rocks, and the weird, romantically picturesque landscape beyond go back to impressions that Patinier received in his homeland on the middle reaches of the Meuse. Only by summarizing all his experience of landscape in the widest sense of the term—of river and countryside, mountain and plane, forest and field, castle and cottage, cloud and sky—could the artist realize his conception of a "universal landscape". In Patinier's little, early "Martyrdom of St Catherine", also at the Vienna Gallery, the individual elements still largely retain their specific values; but with the "Baptism", which belongs to his middle period, every detail merges in the whole. Its seamless solidity of structure and the harmonization of all particulars really do make this work the "first modern landscape".

The "Baptism" came to Vienna with Leopold Wilhelm's collection as an original Herri met de Bles; but already in the Stallburg it appeared with the correct attribution.



PLATE II

BERNAERT VAN ORLEY

*Born 1488 at Brussels, died there 1542**THE ALTARPIECE OF ST THOMAS AND ST MATTHIAS*Oak, Central panel 140 × 180 cm. (55 × 70⁷/₈ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 992

Round about 1512, the guild of builders and carpenters at Brussels presented a new altarpiece to the church of Notre-Dame-du-Sablon. Bernaert van Orley was commissioned to paint it, and it became his first masterpiece. The guild had as its two patrons the Apostles Matthias and Thomas, the former because his attribute, the axe—with which, according to one version of the legend, he had been put to death—was a carpenter's tool; the latter because, owing to apocryphal accounts, he had long been thought of as an architect, and was represented holding a builder's rule.

Today, the altarpiece no longer exists as a single whole: the Vienna Gallery has its central panel, while the two wings are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Brussels. On the backs of the wings, the two saints with their attributes appear in grisaille. Standing on pedestals and turning inwards, they are accompanied by seven kneeling members of the guild.

The central panel is cut in half by a richly decorated pillar right in the foreground, which, on account of the Madonna statue as well as its architectural function, recalls the trumeaux of Gothic portals. On it appears a medallion containing the painter's monogram and full name. Taken together with the fronts of the wings, this division produces four equal fields, on which are represented four main scenes and, behind them, many little subordinate ones. These all follow very closely the narratives in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, which down the centuries was a fundamental source of hagiographical material. All the essentials of the comparatively uneventful legend of St Matthias are treated in the two principal scenes on the right, which present the saint's election as an apostle to replace Judas, and his martyrdom. Besides the representation of his execution with an axe, however, a subsidiary scene in the background follows another legend, and shows him being crucified—perhaps because of the cross's significance to carpenters. It proved very difficult, on the other hand, to include in an equal space even just the basic incidents from the very rich legend of St Thomas. On the left wing alone, behind the representation of the saint's incredulity, five secondary scenes appear in the middle and far distance. They relate to his first successes as an evangelist and as a wonder-worker in India, whither King Gundoforus had summoned him to build a new palace. Afterwards, having converted to Christianity Migdonia, wife of Carisius and sister-in-law of the king, as well as Migdonia's friend Sentice, and even the queen herself, St Thomas was in vain subjected to all kinds of torture. Finally, his tormentors wanted to make him offer up a sacrifice to the sun-god. In response to the saint's prayer, however, "the idol melted like wax", whereupon the high priest raised his sword, and ran St Thomas through, "but the king and Carisius fled". All the later events can be seen on the left half of the central panel, as a counterpart to the "Calling of St Matthias". The architecture may suggest the buildings in fourteenth-century Italian pictures, or recall Renaissance scenic designs; but, above all, it must be remembered that the altarpiece was commissioned by the builders' guild, that St Thomas was believed to have been an architect, and that the idea of a palace—earthly as well as heavenly—to be raised by good works, permeates the whole legend.

An outstanding decorator, in the best sense of the term, with a rich imagination, and also a highly gifted portraitist, Orley was by 1515 working for Maximilian I's daughter Margaret of Austria, Regent of the Netherlands. In 1518, she made him her Court Painter, and after her death in 1530, he retained the post under her successor, Mary of Hungary.

The central panel of the altarpiece was acquired on the art market in 1809 by Emperor Francis I of Austria.





PLATE 12

JAN GOSSAERT (CALLED MABUSE)

Born c. 1478 (?) probably at Maubeuge, died 1533-36 at Middelburg

ST LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN

Oak, 109.5 × 82 cm. (43¹/₄ × 32¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 894

St Luke, the patron of painters, was himself, at least from the sixth century onwards, believed to have been a painter. According to a charming legend, evidently born of the evangelist's long and loving description of her, the Virgin appeared to him in a vision, and had him portray her with the infant Christ. Indeed, some small Byzantine pictures of the Madonna are actually attributed to him.

"St Luke painting the Virgin" was a popular subject in Late Gothic art, especially that of the Low Countries and Germany. Whereas the great Netherlanders of the first half of the fifteenth century, like Rogier van der Weyden, maintained a measured, courtly distance in both poses and setting, towards the end of the century the scene took on a markedly bourgeois character, particularly in the Nuremberg area. St Luke was now shown in his workshop at the easel, with the Virgin posing for him as a creature of flesh and blood.

Gossaert treated the theme twice: first round about 1515 in the large central panel of an altarpiece, executed for the painters' chapel in Saint-Rombout, Malines, but transported to Prague by 1580 and now in the museum there; then a few years later, roughly between 1520 and 1525, in the Vienna picture.

The latter broke clean away from the hitherto prevailing conception of a prosaic "sitting", because Gossaert was no longer satisfied with fairy-tale interpretation of the legend. Instead, he sought to give the story a new power of conviction by making the Virgin appear to the saint as a true vision, no less real—or miraculous—than the inspiration of the gospel writer. Thus, borne and crowned by child angels, Mary reveals herself in a cloud-edged aureole, which fills the room with supernatural light. Moreover, the evangelist kneels before her as in prayer, while a heavenly spirit, foreshadowing later figures of Inspiration, guides the hand in which he holds the silverpoint. If the slippers in the foreground still suggest domesticity and the studio, the setting, with its pure, restrained Renaissance forms, unmistakably expresses the holy solemnity of the moment.

It is uncertain when or where Gossaert was born. Suggestions as to the year vary between 1472 and 1481, while, as a birthplace, Maubeuge, which may only have been the town where his family came from, has recently found a rival in Duurstede Castle near Utrecht. He is, however, the first Netherlandish painter known to have visited Rome to study the monuments of Antiquity—and, naturally, contemporary Italian work as well. In 1508, he went there with his first patron, Philip of Burgundy, and did not return to the Low Countries until the summer of 1509. Thus began the series of so-called Romanticists in Netherlandish art, a line that ended almost exactly a century later with Abraham Janssens. Highly interested in art and humanistic culture, Philip had been sent by Emperor Maximilian I on a diplomatic mission to Pope Julius II. In his biography of Philip, one of Philip the Good's many illegitimate offspring, the humanist Noviomagus (Gerard Geldenhauer), who accompanied the envoy as secretary, tells of how much his master enjoyed the venerable relics of Antiquity, and of how he made the very famous artist Jan Gossaert paint copies of them. Gossaert himself, however, appears to have been more attracted to the new than the old, as is shown by the Vienna picture, in which, for the decoration on the pilasters, the artist utilized drawings that he had made at Rome after Filippino Lippi's frescoes in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. It is also thought that the pose of the Virgin and Child reveals a debt to Raphael's "Casa Tempi Madonna" (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), which in its turn was inspired by Donatello. Moreover, the whole spatial concept has an unmistakably classic quality; while the broad, rounded fold formations, with their rich chiaroscuro, and the imposing, luminous colour groups would hardly be conceivable without this direct knowledge of the new Italian art.

The panel comes from Leopold Wilhelm's collection, in the 1659 inventory of which it is already entered as an original by Johann de Maubeuge. However, according to Storffer's "inventory", it was on show in the Stallburg gallery at the beginning of the eighteenth century as an "aldegraef" (Aldegrevier), and later it simply passed for "Early Netherlandish school". Not until 1880 was the correct original attribution reinstated.



PLATE 13

JAN VAN SCOREL

Born 1495 at Scorel near Alkmaar, died 1562 at Utrecht

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Oak, 114 × 85 cm. (44⁷/₈ × 33¹/₂ in.) Inv. No. 6161

Van Mander has left us a very full biography of Jan van Scorel, which reads like a novel and only needs correcting in a few details. The natural son of the village priest at Scorel near Alkmaar, Jan was himself clearly destined for the Church, and received the foundations of a humanistic education at Alkmaar grammar-school, then in very high repute. He became an orphan early on, but friends took care of the intelligent, gifted boy, who from the outset showed a bent for art. Having studied it first at Alkmaar, then later at Haarlem, he set out in 1518-19 on his great journey, free of all ties. It took him up the Rhine to Speyer, where a cleric acquainted him with the laws of perspective and architecture; then, by way of Strasbourg and Basle, to Dürer at Nuremberg. After crossing the Austrian Alpine region by a route no longer known, the now 25-year-old artist arrived at Obervellach in Carinthia. There, for the Imperial Commander Christoph Francipani, he painted a triptych, signing it with his full name and adding the phrase "*pictoris artis amator*". By this, he announced his new artistic status, above that of a mere craftsman. In the autumn of 1520, he came to Venice, where he joined a company of pilgrims, and embarked for Palestine. On reaching Jerusalem, he spent until the next Easter visiting the holy places; and wherever he went, he made paintings, and especially drawings, for later use.

After his return to Venice, he left again in the autumn of 1522, called to Rome by Hadrian VI. The new pope dismissed all the Italians except for Sebastiano del Piombo, and put his young compatriot in charge of the entire Belvedere, including the collection of antiquities. Like Gossaert, who had visited Rome fourteen years earlier with a princely patron, Scorel was free from corporate restrictions; but he was undoubtedly also more versatile, cultivated, and independent, and he immediately found himself in a position of distinction. For nearly two years, the ancient and modern buildings, the art of Michelangelo, the frescoes left by Raphael, and contemporary Italian painting in general formed his cultural world. When, therefore, on Hadrian's early death, he returned to his homeland in the middle of 1524, he had made the new artistic direction of art. Humanist, painter of altarpieces, and portraitist of high repute, he obtained fame and riches through his extensive activities.

It was probably soon after returning to Utrecht that Jan executed this "Presentation in the Temple", which reveals its "Roman" character above all in the architecture. The crossing of St Peter's has been suggested as a source of inspiration, though only the general idea of this could have been known to the artist, from ground-plan or model. Another possible precedent is the Villa Madama, but it is first and foremost Raphael's "School of Athens" that has a spatial structure broadly corresponding to that of the Vienna picture in the sequence of its architectural parts. Yet the very confrontation with such examples, and particularly with Raphael's fresco, which Jan certainly studied attentively, shows that the painter was not content just to borrow directly. Instead, he became deeply involved in his investigations, thereby gaining a knowledge and understanding that enabled him to create afresh according to the new spirit, but in his own, Netherlandish way. The solidly present, immediately comprehensible architecture of Raphael has been replaced by a construction that only comes to life for the beholder as he reads it carefully with his eye. Jan's independence is still more evident in the relationship between space and figures. Whereas Raphael's architecture remains largely a background, the rhythm into depth of Jan's figures is intimately connected with that of his space, each enhancing the other.

At the end of his enumeration of the master's great works, many of which have since perished, Van Mander mentions an "excellent little picture" of the Presentation, then belonging to a certain "Geert Willemsz. Schoterbosch". With its "splendid architecture", its "elegant vaulting", and its "small figures", it made a very agreeable, indeed a wonderful impression on him. He was writing about the present work, which only reappeared again three centuries later, at a Vienna auction in 1910. Assigned then to the "Regensburg school, showing some characteristics of Altdorfer", it was acquired for the Gallery.



PLATE 14

JOOS VAN CLEVE (VAN DER BEKE)

Born c. 1485, died c. 1540-41 at Antwerp

QUEEN ELEANOR OF FRANCE

Oak, 35.5 × 29.5 cm. (14 × 11⁵/₈ in.) Inv. No. 6079

"*A la christianissima y muy poderosa señora la Reyna my señora*" runs the superscription on the little letter between the extremely small and delicate hands of this princess. At the relevant period, the "most Christian" queen can only have been Eleanor, the wife of the French King Francis I. No doubt she herself wanted the wording to be in Spanish, perhaps as a special record of her own origin.

The eldest daughter of Philip the Fair and Johanna the Mad, Eleanor was born at Brussels in 1498. Her brother Charles V soon found a way of including her, like his three younger sisters, in his policy of arranging marriages to serve dynastic ends. In 1517, he brutally severed the link based on warm mutual affection that had been forming between the archduchess and Frederick of Heidelberg, Count Palatine. Already affianced to her own uncle, King Emmanuel of Portugal, Eleanor was forced to marry him in 1519, despite his being far older and twice a widower. When her husband died two years later, she became engaged to the Constable of Bourbon; but while negotiating the Peace of Madrid after Charles V's victory at Pavia, the French king declared himself ready to marry Eleanor, and on January 19, 1526, the promises were exchanged. Nevertheless, it required the "Ladies" Peace of Cambrai (August 3, 1529) to refresh Francis I's memory, and not until she at last entered Paris on July 4, 1530, did Eleanor become the official queen of France. Some letters and a few brief documents show that, though leading a withdrawn life at court, the queen never forgot the extremely difficult political task assigned to her by the Emperor. The marriage proved unfruitful, and after the king's death in 1547, Eleanor returned to the Low Countries, where she lived mainly with her sister Mary of Hungary, who had become Regent on the death of Margaret of Austria. She accompanied Mary to Spain in 1556 after Charles V's abdication, and died aged sixty at Talaverauela two years later.

A master at Antwerp from 1511, Joos van Cleve is praised by all the early biographers chiefly as a portrait-painter and an outstanding colourist. Eleanor had doubtless at least heard of him at Margaret's court, where she spent her youth and the years of her first widowhood. It was probably she who recommended that the famous artist be called to Paris, and there he portrayed the king, the queen, and many of the nobles. Everything suggests that he was summoned shortly after the royal wedding in 1530.

This little portrait of the queen fully justifies the reputation that the artist is said to have acquired in France. The modelling of the slightly protuberant lips evinces an exceptional tenderness that contrasts with the reflectiveness and intellectuality of the brow. It is precisely in these two features that the Habsburg cast of face appears most clearly, and the resemblance to Eleanor's aunt, Archduchess Margaret, is striking.

The queen's complexion has been rendered extremely delicately, with thin shadows and soft transitions that presuppose a knowledge, perhaps acquired in Paris, of Leonardo's *sfumato* technique. However, the great colourist also reveals himself in his depiction of Eleanor's costume. The gleam of the silver threads in the shot-silk sleeves and the flash of a very light red beside the many passages of soft white are highly original inventions, colour harmonies that draw meaning and life from a brilliant but never virtuosic representation of materials. No other portrait by Joos van Cleve offers such a wealth of beauty in the sphere of clothing and fabrics, apart from the one of the French king in the Johnson collection, Philadelphia, and the somewhat later "Henry VIII" at Hampton Court.

As with most such royal portraits, there exist a number of replicas and variants of differing quality, but the Vienna panel is undoubtedly the best. It comes from the collection of Baron Minutoli (Liegnitz), and, attributed to Gossaert, was acquired in 1908 for the Gallery, where it can now be displayed beside five other works by Joos.

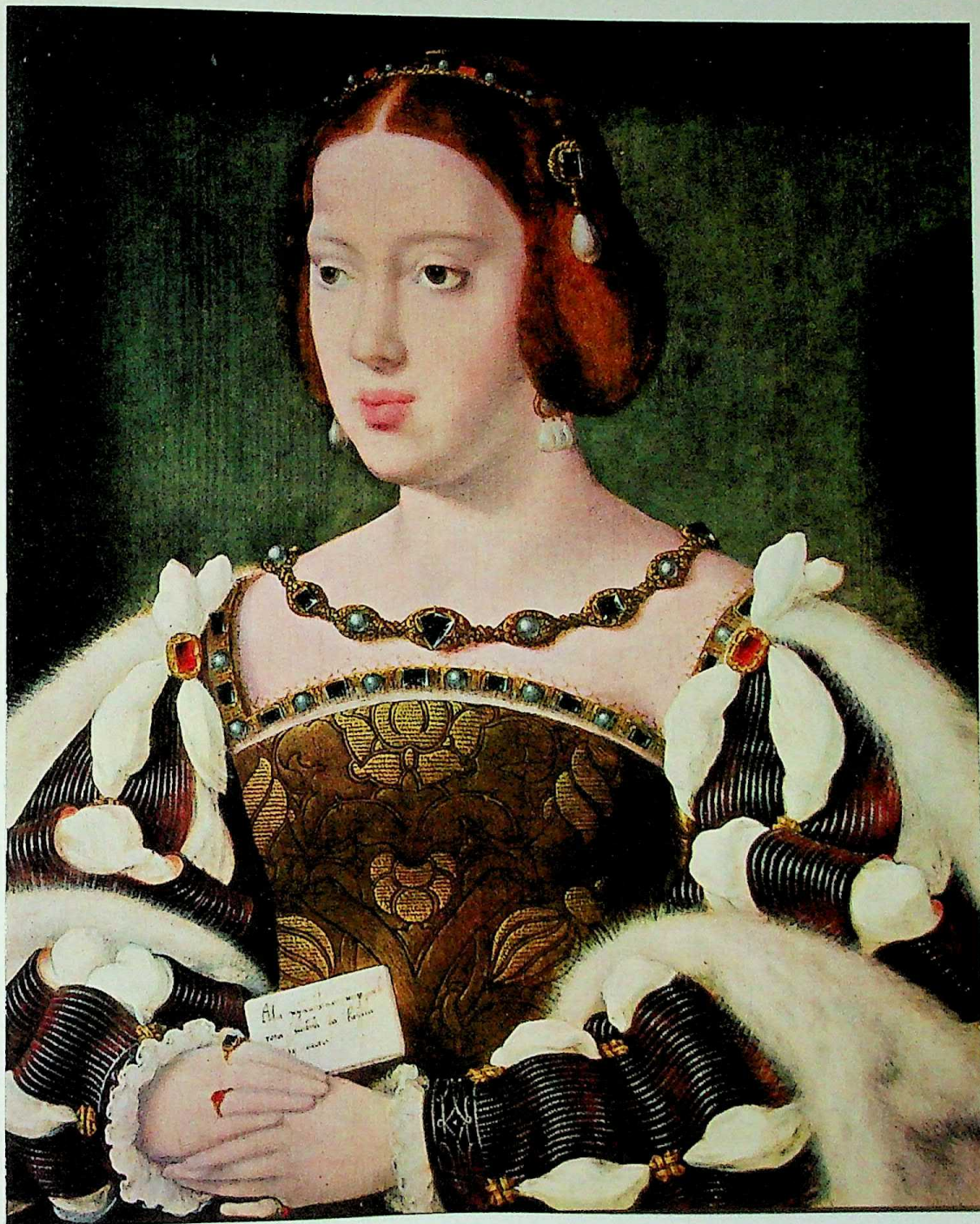


PLATE 15

MARTIN SCHONGAUER

Born c. 1430 (?) at Augsburg (?), died 1491 at Breisach

THE HOLY FAMILY

Copper-beech, 26 × 17 cm. (10¹/₄ × 6⁵/₈ in.) Inv. No. 843

Among German artists of the generation before Dürer, the most important and also the most popular is undoubtedly Martin Schongauer. The Schlettstadt humanist Jakob Wimpfeling, who probably knew him personally, wrote in 1505 that painters flocked from all sides to "copy and reproduce" the master's pictures. We know that in 1492, during his first journey towards the West, the young Dürer stopped at Colmar, where he was given a friendly reception by the brothers of the great artist, who had died the previous year, and was able to study Schongauer's works. Finally, he received a present of some drawings, precious relics that he neatly annotated after returning to Nuremberg.

Three groups of works have combined to establish Schongauer's reputation as a milestone in the history of art: his magnificent linear creations, including prints and drawings; his monumental, large-scale paintings like the "Madonna of the Rose Hedge" in St Martin at Colmar; and his small panel-paintings, which were already famous in his own day. "Absolutely nothing finer, nothing lovelier" could be set beside the latter, which were sent "to Italy, Spain, France, England, and other parts of the world". Only a few of these little gems, which again and again represent the Virgin, the Holy Family, or the Nativity, have survived down to our times. One demonstrably comes from Spain, another from England.

The Vienna "Holy Family" is commonly regarded as the most mature of these small panel-paintings—indeed, it ranks among the most harmonious and subtle of all the master's compositions. As in the engravings, Schongauer shows his maturity by very wisely limiting his subject-matter, which is compensated for many times over by the formal purity, the rich and powerful expression, and, above all, the extremely disciplined organization. Compared with almost every other such panel, there is a conspicuous absence of "arty" or anecdotal features, such as perspective tricks, landscape extensions, and the like. At the centre, the figure of the Madonna with her Child wholly dominates the composition, the lighting, and, naturally, the colour-scheme. The dazzling vermilion of the Virgin's gown, with its massive folds, and the wine red of her mantle, which has slipped down on to the seat in finer, more angular folds, are strengthened by the grey-green of the floor and the wall beyond. It is upon these reds and this form that the light floods down. The figure of the Virgin has been conceived in very strongly spatial terms. Viewed slightly from the side, it introduces a powerful diagonal leading the eye into depth. Though one at first reads it only as surface ornament, the niche in the wall actually makes its own contribution to this movement inwards, as the round water-bottle on the ledge continues it right behind the Virgin. The main diagonal is accompanied by others all running in the same direction, and everything is spatially co-ordinated with the Virgin by means of these parallels: the mantle hanging over the seat, the shoulders of the infant Christ, and, in the background, Joseph with the bundle of hay, the animals, and the manger. The cool, heavy blue of Joseph's garment and the emergence from the gloom of a few details touched by a raking gleam of light—the donkey's muzzle, one of the horns of the ox, Joseph's head and foot—constitute an invention only to be understood in all its magnificence within the frame of the whole spatial conception, which also includes the delightful basket of grapes and staff in the foreground on the right. Being set very close to the spectator, this passage like a lovely little still-life cannot help catching his eye with its robust yellow wicker-work and gleaming fruit. Thereby it introduces him to the spatial sequence in which everything from the Virgin to the tiniest object has been so strictly ordered.

The picture was bought at Vienna in 1865 for the Gallery, and came from the collection of the Director of the Imperial Mint, Böhm.



PLATE 16

ALBRECHT DÜRER

*Born 1471 at Nuremberg, died there 1528**THE ADORATION OF THE TRINITY*Poplar, 135 × 123.4 cm. ($53\frac{1}{8} \times 48\frac{1}{2}$ in.) Signed and dated 1511. Inv. No. 838

In February 1507, Albrecht Dürer returned to Nuremberg after his second stay in Venice, where his "Madonna of the Rose Garlands" had revealed him to himself and to the world as a great painter. "Now," he wrote to his friend Pirckheimer, "the envious have become silent, and everyone admits that they have never seen more beautiful colours."

As soon as he got back, Dürer received three important commissions. For his old patron Frederick the Wise of Saxony, he painted the "Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Christians" (1508). The Frankfurt merchant Jakob Heller ordered an altarpiece with the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin (1509). Finally, Dürer created a third masterpiece for his fellow-citizen Matthäus Landauer: the "Adoration of the Trinity", which was to be placed in the chapel of the so-called Zwölfmännerhaus, an almshouse for twelve old men at Nuremberg. Whereas the Frankfurt picture was destroyed by fire at Munich in 1729, the other two are now united in the Vienna Gallery.

The earliest surviving sketch for the whole work is dated 1508 (Chantilly, Musée Condé), which means that Dürer had been commissioned by then, and was already delving very deep into the problem. This drawing gives an impression of the intended form of the altarpiece, which was extremely modern for the period. Picture and Renaissance frame, on which the figure decoration representing the Last Judgement complements the main theme, were conceived from the outset as a single whole. Already in the sketch, the centre of the composition is dominated by the almost geometric group of the Trinity. On either side of it, there are companies of saints: to the left, the women led by the Virgin, and to the right, St John the Baptist with the men. Dürer has also formulated here, though less consistently than in the final version, his idea of placing those in adoration—clerics to the left, laics to the right—on a cloud floating above a landscape, so that, together with the saints and angels, they form the Augustinian *Civitas Dei*, a conception that dominated men's picture of the universe from the early Middle Ages down to Dürer's times.

It is understandable that in 1585 Emperor Rudolph II worked very pertinaciously to acquire this masterpiece, which was then still *in situ* and owned by the Landauer foundation. It finally became his at a price of 700 guilders, and was the first great Dürer purchased by this Emperor, to whom the Vienna Gallery owes almost all its Dürer collection. Karel van Mander admired it at Prague in 1617, but it soon found its way into the Ecclesiastical Treasury at Vienna. In 1780, it was withdrawn together with seventy-eight other works, all destined for the Belvedere gallery. The original frame designed by Dürer remained at Nuremberg and later entered the Germanisches Nationalmuseum there, but a copy of it was made in 1880 for the picture at Vienna.





PLATE 17

ALBRECHT DÜRER

*Born 1471 at Nuremberg, died there 1528**THE MADONNA WITH THE SLICE OF PEAR*Limewood, 49 × 37 cm. (19¹/₄ × 14⁵/₈ in.) Signed and dated 1512. Inv. No. 848

While he was working on the Heller altarpiece, Dürer complained strongly about the enormous effort that it cost him and the amount of time he wasted in laboriously applying colours instead of devoting himself to engraving. It would seem that he now wished formally to renounce painting, even though it had brought him so much pleasure since the "Madonna of the Rose Garlands". In actual fact, the artist's graphic works had already become quite extensive at the time of the "Adoration of the Trinity", and we know what heights were reached in the following years.

At first, therefore, the existence of the Madonna of 1512 may seem rather surprising, but perhaps here too the commission had been accepted considerably earlier. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that this painting is fundamentally different from those of the preceding years. Instead of the multitude of beautiful little details that appear in the earlier works, the Vienna panel, with its two heads arranged very close together within the narrow frame, presents a largeness of form that is new in Dürer's art. At the same time, the painter has clearly drawn to some extent on old studies. If it seems probable that this has been done in the case of the Virgin's head, among the loveliest and most charming blooms put forth by the Late Gothic period, it is certain as regards the child's body. Here, the picture is based on a large study done with the brush on blue Venetian paper for the infant Christ in the "Madonna of the Rose Garlands" (1506; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale). One can easily see the correspondence in the lower parts of the bodies, which, moreover, are almost the same size. Yet consider what Dürer made of the study six years later at Nuremberg. In the Paris drawing, the child's body is calmly extended in the Venetian manner and attains maximum legibility: one little foot raised and seen from the side, the upper part of the trunk fully turned towards the beholder. How exuberantly alive, by comparison, is the nude of the Vienna panel! How roundly the knees project, and how firmly the foot presses against the Madonna's breast! With what force the body turns and the bent arms almost reach out of the picture, as the head jerks round towards the mother! The form has acquired a grandeur that is truly Michelangelesque, thanks to the broad handling, the soft *sfumato* of the shadows, and the classical moderation of the triad of colours (black, yellow, blue) that surrounds the flesh-tints.

In 1600, Emperor Rudolph II managed after long efforts to acquire two Dürer Madonnas, as well as many other notable pictures and *objets d'art*, from Count Cantecroy, the nephew and heir of the great art-patron from Besançon, Cardinal Granvella. One of them, "a picture of Our Lady with her little son", is very probably the present work. The other may be the little panel, barely a span high, showing the Virgin with the Christ Child at her breast, which dates from 1503 and is thus the earliest Dürer possessed by the Vienna Gallery. However, one cannot be sure, because in the collection of the Imhoffs, a Nuremberg patrician family with whom the Emperor in 1588 negotiated the purchase of various Dürers, there was an obviously very important Madonna, which may or may not have been acquired then. Both paintings are known to have been in the Ecclesiastical Treasury in 1758, but it does not seem that they were entrusted to the Gallery until 1880, shortly before its transfer to the new building on the Burgring.



PLATE 18

ALBRECHT DÜRER

Born 1471 at Nuremberg, died there 1528

EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN I

Limewood, 73 × 61.5 cm. (28³/₄ × 24¹/₄ in.) Signed and dated 1519. Inv. No. 825

When Maximilian I convoked an Imperial Diet to meet at Augsburg during the summer of 1518, Dürer accompanied the representatives from Nuremberg, a free city of the Empire. We cannot say whether he was actually a member of the delegation or went with it for private reasons. Nor can it be established who took the initiative with regard to the portrait: Emperor or artist. Only the fruit of their encounter is known to us—but it can be followed through its entire development from the first sketch down to the finished work in the Vienna Gallery.

A charcoal drawing in the Albertina, "done from life" at Augsburg, forms the starting-point. Though it may at first have been thought of solely as a basis for the large woodcut that immediately followed it and was then repeated or copied many times, there is good reason to suppose that Dürer had a painting in mind all along. Anyway, the artist's two painted portraits of the Emperor are both based directly on the Augsburg drawing. The one in the Nationalmuseum at Nuremberg, executed in watercolour on canvas and so ruined by oil repaint and superimposed varnish that it can now hardly be considered a Dürer any longer, was perhaps a kind of trial run for the Vienna picture.

Just at the time when Maximilian produced his wood-engraved works, Baldassare Castiglione defined in *Il Cortegiano* the requirements of the Renaissance gentleman. If the Emperor wished to appear in his published recollections as the equal of his forebears, the superior of his contemporaries, and in every particular the best, the most skilful, and the most high-minded of all, this was simply because the "last knight" aspired to the most elect nobility as an expression of imperial majesty. Dürer himself saw Maximilian from the beginning as such an embodiment of knightliness, as the noblest of noblemen, and it is this essential trait of the Emperor's that gives the portrait, naturally modified as it advanced from sketch through woodcut to painting, its determinant individual flavour.

The artist inscribed the charcoal drawing, perhaps immediately, as follows: "This is Emperor Maximilian, whom I, Albrecht Dürer, portrayed in his small chamber, high up in the palace at Augsburg, in the year 1518 on the Monday after John the Baptist." Brief as the encounter was, nothing characteristic escaped the artist. He examined the face very closely, and his statements about it are fresh, lively, direct, and, for all their terseness, exhaustive.

Naturally, such a sensitive, personal image was unsuitable for printing and wide dissemination. Publicity considerations and not just technical factors gave rise to the hardness and coldness of the woodcut portrait, above which, as round a coin, there runs an inscription in the Antique, lapidary manner:

*Imperator Ceasar Divus Maximilianus
Pius Felix Augustus*

Also as on a coin, the head has so to speak been stamped, the unequivocal, impersonal calligraphy of the woodcut replacing the varied, delicate charcoal line.

The Vienna panel goes even beyond the drawing. Maximilian died on February 12, 1519, only a few months after the Diet of Augsburg. While the woodcut was obviously published posthumously, the painting had not even been finished at this date. Intended from the start for the Emperor and his descendants, the latter ended up as an obituary of Maximilian. Its function was to eternalize the Emperor, and the solemn, lengthy inscription is matched by a substantial enrichment of the representation. Much more fundamental and remarkable, however, is its almost indescribable impressiveness, achieved despite the absence of almost every token of Imperial dignity. Without omitting any personal feature or realistic element, the artist has created an image of majesty valid for all times.

When, in the summer of 1520, Dürer travelled to the Netherlands, he took the portrait with him, and, at Malines, offered it to Archduchess Margaret, the daughter of the dead Emperor and aunt of Charles V. "I also visited Lady Margaret," the painter wrote in his diary, "and showed her my Emperor and wanted to give it to her. But she disliked it so much that I took it away again." Nevertheless, the picture remained in the Low Countries, left by Dürer, in exchange for a piece of white English cloth, with the son-in-law of his close friend Tomaso Bambelli, the archduchess's paymaster. What happened to the work afterwards is not yet clear, and the next certain reference to it is in the 1783 catalogue of the Belvedere gallery.



POTENTISSIMVS · MAXIMVS · ET · INVICTISSIMVS · CÆSAR · MAXIMILIANVS
QVI · CVNCTOS · SVI · TEMPORIS · REGES · ET · PRINCIPES · IVSTICIA · PRVDENCIA
MAGNANIMITATE · LIBERALITATE · PRÆCIPVE · VERO · BELLICA · LAVDE · ET
ANIMI · FORTITVDINE · SVPERAVIT · NATVS · EST · ANNO · SALVTIS · HVMANÆ ·
M · CCCC · LIX · DIE · MARCII · IX · VIXIT · ANNOS · LIX · MENSES · IX · DIES · XXV
DECESSIT · VERO · ANNO · M · D · XIX · MENSIS · IANVARII · DIE · XII · QVEM · DEVS
OPT · MAX · IN · NVMERVM · VIVENCIVM · REFERRERE · VELIT ·

PLATE 19

ALBRECHT DÜRER

Born 1471 at Nuremberg, died there 1528

JOHANN KLEBERGER

Limewood, 36.7 × 36.6 cm. (14½ × 14⅜ in.) Signed and dated 1526. Inv. No. 850

No less important in its effect on his subsequent work than the two early Italian journeys, Dürer's visit to the Netherlands at the zenith of his life had a very deep and lasting influence on him, even though he now confronted things with the masterful assurance of the experienced man. What mattered was no longer the separate incidents, the encounters with particular people or works of art about which we are so precisely informed, but his total experience of the great world. It left him with a full, lucid awareness of his own humanity, a mature learning, and a practical knowledge of the new monumental form. The series of excellent portraits that Dürer painted during his last years bears eloquent testimony to this refinement of his formal vision.

Among the very best of these late works is the Kleberger portrait. How successfully Antique idealization and present reality have been blended! What new immediacy Dürer has injected into his pattern, which may have been one of Burgkmair's Roman Emperors or an Early Renaissance medallion! Here, however, only the square "frame" with the circular opening is of stone: light grey marble. It is shown in perspective, slightly from the side, to give a feeling of depth. Even the dark slab of bluish green marble, speckled with brown, that forms the background does not provide a clear limit, especially where the shadows become dense. Here, the head seems no less to penetrate into this unfathomed depth than, at the front, it juts out beyond the frame.

There is a peculiar, mutually enhancing interaction between the actual portrait, so full of energy and sparkling with life, and the hard stone frame, at either corner of which a sign has been painted. Below, we see, on the left, Kleberger's expressive coat of arms (Klee-Berg: clover-hill) and, on the right, the crest that goes with it; above, on the left, a yellow and gold zodiacal sign of Leo in a group of six stars—evidently Kleberger's constellation. Being so small, these signs make the head look colossal, and it has much of the monumentality and powerful characterization of the Four Evangelists, which belong to the same period. Indeed, in no other late portrait does Dürer come so close to those two panels.

Just as unusual as the presence here of his zodiacal sign (placed in the same position as the escutcheon framed by the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece in the Maximilian portrait) is the life-story of Johann Kleberger. His father, a man of originally humble station called Scheuenpflug, left Nuremberg, perhaps under a cloud. Though he remained abroad, his son later returned with an immense fortune and a new name to the city, where Dürer portrayed him at the age of forty. Having fallen in love with Felicitas, Pirckheimer's favourite daughter, Kleberger married her, despite violent opposition from her father. Yet only a few days after the wedding, he abandoned both his wife and his native city for unknown reasons. When Felicitas died a year and a half later, her father unjustly accused his son-in-law of poisoning her. Kleberger settled at Lyons in 1532, became a magistrate there in 1547, and died the year after, leaving all his wealth to the poor of the city. Grateful for his good works, the people of Lyons erected a wooden monument to "le bon Allemand". It was replaced during the last century by a stone copy known as "l'Homme de la roche".

The portrait came by way of inheritance into the hands of the patrician Imhoff family (who were also Pirckheimer's heirs) at Nuremberg, because Kleberger's unfortunate wife had previously been married to Hans Imhoff and borne him several children. Emperor Rudolph II obtained it from the Imhoff collection in 1604, along with many other objects. From Prague, the picture entered the Treasury at Vienna, and then, in 1748, the Stallburg gallery. In 1781, it was moved to the Belvedere.



PLATE 20

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

Born 1472 at Kronach in Upper Franconia, died 1553 at Weimar

THE CRUCIFIXION

Beech, 58.5 × 45 cm. (23 × 17³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 6905

At the end of the fifteenth century, painting, which in the preceding decades had progressively broadened its idea of what aspects of the world were suitable for representation, pressed forward throughout Central Europe towards an extremely intimate synthesis of man and landscape. There was something of a contest between Italians, Germans, and Netherlanders, and the fruits of their efforts varied according to country and race. A stylistic trend of particular interest and note in its essential romanticism issued from the Austrian Alpine region, where it was specially favoured by the new colouristic freedom of Pacher's continuators, by the persistence of a genuine naïveté, and by the constant influence of a virgin countryside. Several young and impetuously progressive artists were working contemporaneously but independently of one another in a very singular manner. Some of them then met up again with local men, to their mutual benefit, while satisfying the extensive pictorial requirements of the court at Innsbruck. In his youth, Lucas Cranach figured among the pioneers of this "Danube school". The so-called "Scots Crucifixion" is not only Cranach's earliest known work, but the first example of the new style, and it already gives full weight to all the latter's characteristics: vivid experience of nature, extremely powerful emotion, harmony of man and landscape, idiosyncratic expressive means, creative recasting of form and colour.

The scenery, for a start, is new and personal. Golgotha now appears as a waste between steep cliffs and wild trees, a mountain landscape towards sundown, with a castle in the distance. It is a place full of agitation and tumult, where the obliquely falling light paints long dark shadows on the ground, and makes all the colours glow. The same primitive force also permeates the representation of the figures, which crowd together in the very limited space. Even the smallest details owe their form to the outward pressure of the ferment generated within them through their participation in the event. The crosses themselves have an unprecedented expressive value. That of the good thief on the left consists of a very straight tree-trunk with dark, almost black bark. It rises from the group of pious women, while above the group of the "wicked" towers that of the bad thief, yellowish white and curved like the body of the pot-bellied rogue nailed to it: an image of stubbornly impenitent pride. Christ's cross is very different. Apparently taller and thinner, it reaches further down than the others. It has a more delicate structure, a more restless outline, and is full of an excited movement imparted especially by the long gash on the front, where it has been partly stripped of its bark. It, too, is injured, like the crucified Christ, who, bleeding from a thousand wounds, battered, bruised, and broken, presents a shatteringly woeful sight that is hardly less effective than Grünewald's images. Below, the band of mourners on the left is balanced on the right by the mounted "executioners", magnificent in their gay colours and scintillating lights against darks. Almost more expressive than these remarkably arrogant yet vaguely uneasy figures are their horses. Between two dark-coated beasts shines forth the lightest passage in the entire picture: that formed by the white and grey horse. With lowered head, it restlessly paws the ground, where one sees repulsive things that are doubtless intended to increase the horror of the occasion.

The panel is mentioned, but as a work by Lucas van Leyden, in an inventory dating from about 1800 of the Schottenstift, a monastery actually founded for Irish Benedictines. It was certainly painted at Vienna, perhaps for the foundation itself. We know that between 1500 and 1503 Cranach worked in the city as a wood-engraver for the first Viennese publisher, and executed portraits of two distinguished professors and rectors of the university: Cuspinian and Reuss. In 1504 or 1505, he was summoned to Wittenberg by Frederick the Wise, and spent the rest of his life in the service of the dukes of Saxony. Between its new Saxon banks, the foaming Austrian torrent calmed down remarkably quickly. Not until 1934 was this important picture bought in Vienna from the Schottenstift.



PLATE 21

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

*Born 1472 at Kronach in Upper Franconia, died 1553 at Weimar**JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES*Poplar, 87 × 56 cm. (34 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 22 in.) Signed. Inv. No. 858

During the half century that he spent working for the Saxon court, Cranach served three successive masters: the Elector Frederick the Wise, Dürer's patron, who died in 1525; John the Steadfast, who ruled for only seven years; and, from 1532, John Frederick the Magnanimous, who survived him by a year. Apart from the usual demands that any Court Painter had to satisfy, the duties imposed on Cranach by each of these princes were very different. Frederick the Wise, who still had in mind the lofty traditional functions of art, called him to Saxony to decorate his castles, but above all to paint altarpieces for the churches and chapels. John Frederick also wanted chiefly sacred works of this kind, but, in accordance with his own personality and religious convictions, they had to be large and embody programmes of a Protestant stamp. John the Steadfast, on the other hand, made only limited use of his Court Painter, but to his reign belong a great many portraits and particularly smallish pictures that are mostly wordly in content or at least in character. By far the majority of the numerous scenes from the Old Testament or ancient mythology—Adam and Eve, Venus, Lucretia, the Three Graces, the Judgement of Paris, the "Ill-matched Lovers"—and the clad or unclad Saxon ladies and damsels were painted at this period; or at any rate it was then that the types were established. Sandrart was referring principally to works from these years when he wrote in his *Teutsche Academie* (1675) that Cranach was "singularly refined and agreeable in painting and drawing", that he had devoted himself especially to portraiture, but that the Saxon court had a high regard for his "half-length representations of Lucretia, old men, figures of women, and so forth, which he dressed *alla moderna*..."

One such half-length is the "Judith with the Head of Holofernes" now in the Vienna Gallery. *Alla moderna*, meaning after the latest fashion, certainly applies to this costume, which is typical of the period around 1530 and appears in quite a number of other paintings by Cranach. Not only the dress is modern, however, but also the idea of passing off an elegant contemporary beauty as Judith by just giving her the requisite attributes; or, vice versa, of dressing a character from the Bible so modishly.

In the Vienna picture, the lady is standing behind a parapet that cuts her off from the spectator. On it lies the strikingly foreshortened head of Holofernes, with sightless eyes, open mouth, and yellow, waxen complexion. Judith rests her left hand on the victim's hair, playfully catching up the curls between her fingers, while, with her right, she raises a sword, the blade of which still bears reddish traces of her deed. It is they that give a special significance and inner justification to the picture's gory colour range: to its dark sinisterly glowing brick-red shaded with black, and its strong, fiery orange heightened with an intense yellow.

Evidently the times and Saxon society took a great delight in such heroines from the Bible or Classical legend, for this is by no means the only Judith. Moreover, the theme, on which Cranach's workshop often produced variations (closest to the Vienna version is the one in the Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart), remains basically the same, whether it is a question of Salome and the Baptist's head or Jael and Sisera with a hammer and nail instead of a sword. Perhaps Cranach was attracted as an artist by the contrast between horror and smooth, cold beauty, and perhaps court-circles also relished the charm of "dressing-up". For the ladies and gentlemen who commissioned such works, however, the piquant dalliance with power may have been an added attraction.

In the painter's *œuvre*, there are a considerable number of female figures—heads of women or girls—but we do not know whether they are true portraits or, despite their very strong characterization, ideal images. This applies to the many representations of Judith, Salome, Lucretia, and others. Probably it would be going too far to see in every one of these true Saxon girls a likeness of the picture's purchaser; but it is certain that such female figures project themselves only too readily into this heroic and seductive fiction and that therein lies the real explanation of the popularity of these paintings.

The present work, which has a serpent with raised wings as a signature and is datable to about 1530, was already in the Hofburg at Vienna when the so-called Inventory G was compiled during 1612–18. In 1780, it was transferred from the Treasury to the Belvedere. Carried off to Paris in 1809 it was returned in 1815.

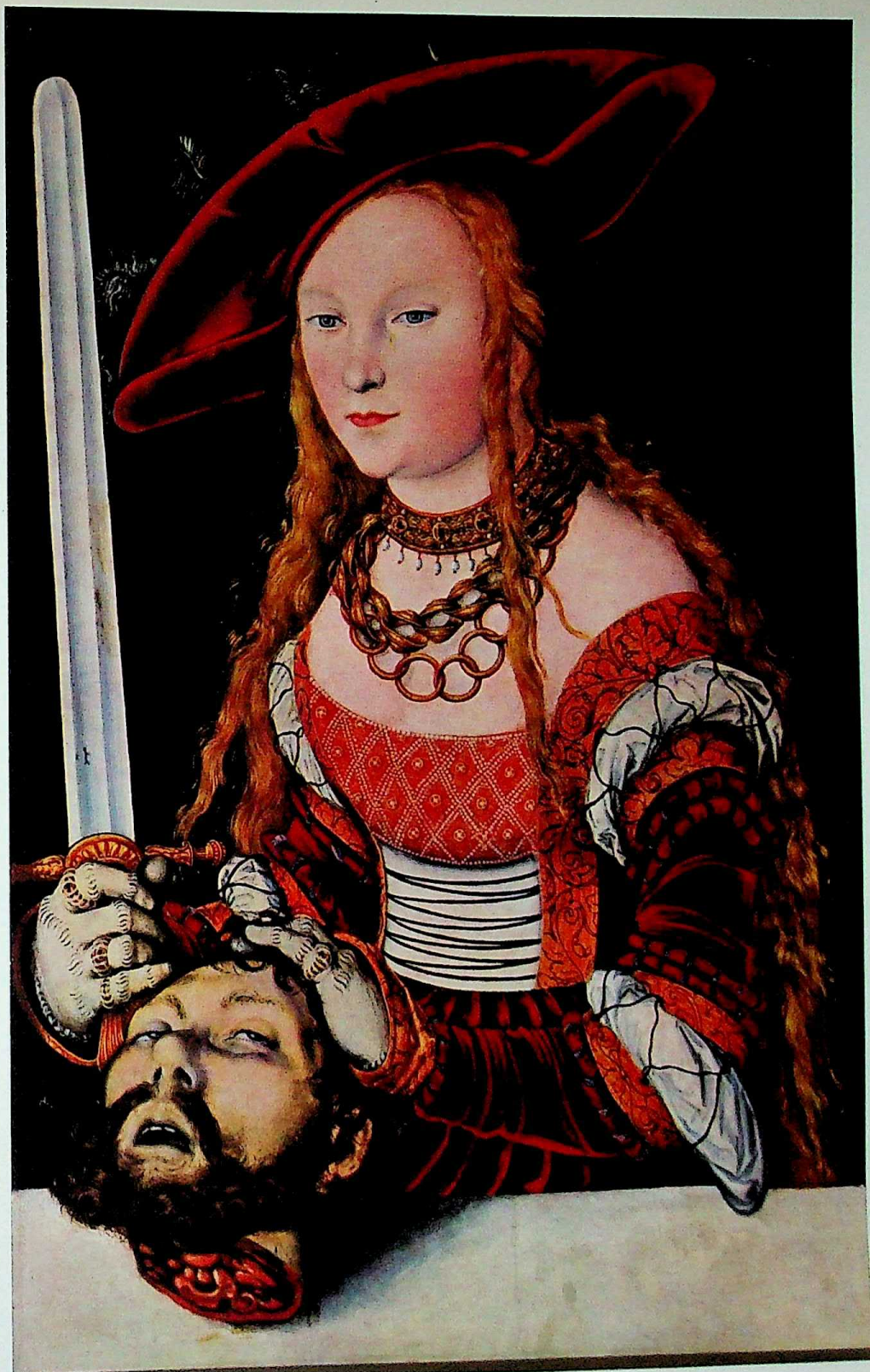


PLATE 22

LUCAS CRANACH THE YOUNGER

*Born 1515 at Wittenberg, died 1586 at Weimar**A STAG-HUNT OF THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK*Larch, 117 × 177 cm. (46 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 69 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.) Signed and dated 1544. Inv. No. 856

Along with tournaments, hunts were among the most important social events in the sixteenth century at courts north of the Alps. Add to this the well-known passion of the Saxon rulers for the chase, and one will not be surprised that the two Cranachs had repeatedly to depict special hunts, such as those attended by illustrious guests. Making "documentary" pictures of this kind was one of the Court Painter's regular duties, and it is even said of the elder Cranach that he had to accompany his master at Wittenberg when he went out hunting, in order to record each event on the spot.

Lucas Cranach the Younger's "Stag-hunt" is at once a landscape, a group portrait, a history piece, a genre painting, and an animal picture. One surveys the entire scene as if from a raised observation post. It would appear that the broad water-meadows of the Elbe near Torgau were just the spot for a big hunt like this, as Cranach's ever-varied scenes of the chase are set again and again in this area. The high sky-line is dominated by the town, and right in the middle stands Schloss Hartenfels. Below it, cutting the picture horizontally, extends the Elbe. It flows from the left, where far-off blue mountains draw the eye into depth, passes under the bridge before the castle, and runs on calmly towards the right, where some floating mills are moored. Almost three-quarters of the picture surface has been given over to the terrain of the hunt, which is crossed by strips of woodland and a dead branch of the river. In the foreground on the left, the chief nobles have taken up positions among the bushes on the bank, accompanied by their huntsmen and servants. First we see the guest of honour Ferdinand I (1503-64, King of the Romans from 1531), who is clad in the Spanish black and wears the Golden Fleece on his chest. Slightly to the right of him, the white-bearded Elector Frederick II the Wise, Count Palatine of the Rhine (1482-1556), who has grey clothes but likewise sports the Golden Fleece, is in the very act of aiming his crossbow. Next, at a somewhat increased distance, comes the host, the Elector of Saxony John Frederick the Magnanimous (1503-54), who was defeated and taken prisoner a few years later by Charles V at Mühlberg. The figure in the middle under the tree is probably Duke Ernest of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1497-1549).

Seen in relation to the bloody slaughter in the foreground and beyond the arm of the river, the woodland on the left presents an idyllic appearance. Among the chromatic accents are the kennel-men waiting in the bushes at various points to go into action with their dogs, and the two servants transporting a couple of dead stags across the water by boat.

This magnificent composition was, as it were, prepared for long in advance, the general type having been developed in the Cranach workshop twenty-five years earlier. There is a picture by the father dating from 1529, of which the best version is again at Vienna (Inv. No. 3560), that already contains essential elements of the 1544 "Stag-hunt". Yet even the elder Cranach had his models, for he in his turn harked back to the miniatures of the *Tyrolean Hunting Book*, which was executed at Innsbruck for Maximilian I by his Court Painter Jörg Kölderer as early as 1500.

In the upper corners of the picture are painted the escutcheons of, on the left, the electorate of Bavaria and, on the right, the electorate of Saxony. A dragon with lowered wings appears on the boat as a signature, below the date 1544. The work was formerly attributed to Cranach the Elder, who even today is still credited with the two contemporary hunting scenes at the Prado. In passing judgement on the trio, among which the Vienna panel takes pride of place, one could scarcely hope to establish distinctions that would justify ascribing the latter alone to the son. Having already belonged to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, the picture was in Schloss Laxenburg near Vienna during the eighteenth century. Only at the beginning of the nineteenth did it enter the Belvedere.





PLATE 23

ALBRECHT ALTDORFER

Born before 1480, died 1538 at Regensburg

THE RESURRECTION

Pine, 70 × 37 cm. (27½ × 14¾ in.) Dated 1518. Inv. No. 6796

St Florian, the monastery of the Canons Regular of St Augustine in Upper Austria, shelters a priceless treasure. It comprises the remains of two Late Gothic folding altarpieces painted by Albrecht Altdorfer and dedicated respectively to St Sebastian and St Florian. The former is the earlier, and may possibly have adorned an altar consecrated in 1509. At all events, it seems that the artist set to work a few years after this, though he only finished the job in 1518. Every one of the painted panels has survived. With the outer wings closed, the altarpiece showed four incidents from the legend of St Sebastian, and, with them open, eight scenes from the Passion, the total width then being over thirteen feet. The innermost part, or shrine, which could only be seen on major feast-days when the inner wings were also opened, was filled with wood-carving. Even the backs of these wings bore reliefs, and the inside of the predella was decorated in the same way. Painted on two small fixed wings at either side of the latter, one saw, to the left, St Margaret and St Barbara, and, to the right, the kneeling figure of Peter Maurer, the Provost of St Florian's, who commissioned the altarpiece. The outsides of the predella's folding wings also displayed paintings: on the left, an "Entombment", and on the right, a "Resurrection". Though the sculpture has unfortunately been lost, and all the other painted panels remain at the monastery, these last two have found their way into the Vienna Gallery. On their backs, they still bear traces of the reliefs once glued to them and of the blue background.

In the "Resurrection", dawn has only just begun to break, but the darkness is swept aside by the luminous apparition of the risen Christ. Like a lamp, he stands at the mouth of the cave on the red tomb with its heavy lid. His white drapery, swirling away into depth, is almost dazzling, and so is his banner of victory, which flutters horizontally. The miraculous radiance penetrates into every nook and cranny of the cave, imparting a mysterious life even to each little stone on the ground. At the front, against the light, a soldier in chain-mail of a fascinating transparent grey squats fast asleep on the corner of an ancient grave. To his left, the light strikes another, this time wearing gold-touched bronze armour, who with half-open eyes sits propped up against the "plinth" on which the Virgin and St John are standing in the second Vienna panel. Rather further into depth, the increased wakefulness of some of the other guards is accompanied by livelier colours. On the left, at the edge of the picture, a halberdier in flashing armour stares foolishly at the apparition, still half asleep. Next comes a red-clad sleeping figure, then, behind, another helmeted warrior, and lastly a young man in golden armour, his hair on end and his eyes wide open with terror. Behind this group, right at the entrance of the cave, appear two more men, who are summoning the guards around the camp-fire by means of gestures. Finally, one can dimly discern three other figures even further off, before the night-blackened mountains. They are the three Marys making their way to the tomb. This area of darkness is, however, narrowly confined, for the first violet light already touches the mountain-tops, and, beyond them, Easter day is breaking in all its splendour. The struggle between the light of the sun, which hangs as a greenish golden disc just above the horizon at the edge of the cave, and the moonlight, which still penetrates the clouds above, can hardly be understood as a natural event, any more than the many-coloured scintillation that it produces between the delicate, black branches of the trees. It is a conflict that passes through the entire gamut of reds, which are spread as glazes over the gold, across the dark, heavy green and grey to the brilliant lunar radiance above. Yet all this magic is exceeded by the supernatural brightness of the Christ figure with its huge nimbus of pure gold and accompaniment of three glowingly colourful angels.

Along with Wolf Huber's Feldkirch altarpiece, the two for St Florian rank among the most coherent and forceful expressions of the Danube style, and they provide conclusive evidence of the heights reached by the school. In them, the Danubian synthesis of man and nature has been realized most perfectly.

It is generally accepted that the date 1518 painted in large figures on the "Resurrection" indicates the year when the whole altarpiece was completed. St Florian sold the "Resurrection" in 1930 to the Vienna Gallery, which had already bought the "Entombment" from the same source in 1923.

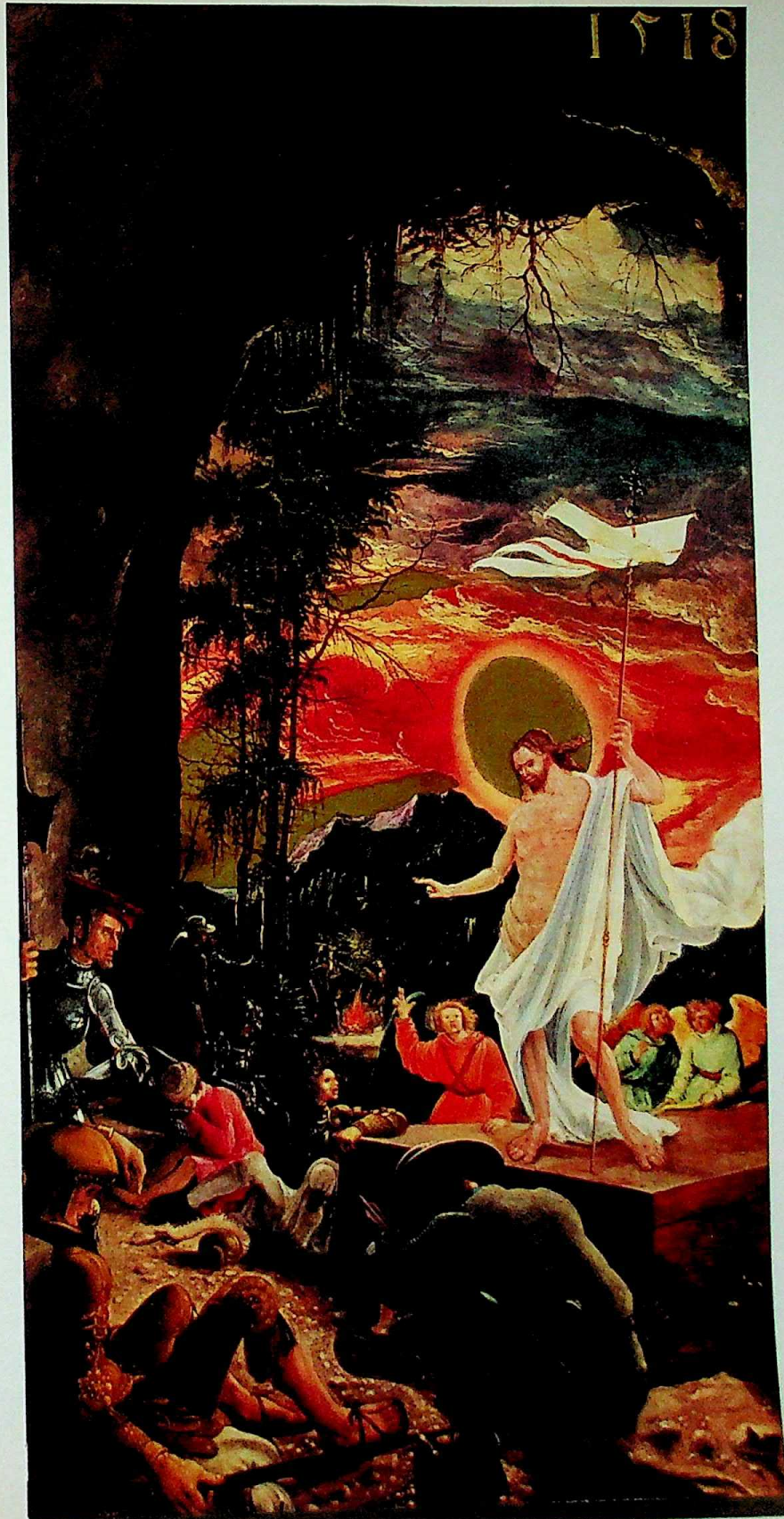


PLATE 24

WOLF HUBER

Born after 1480 at Feldkirch in Vorarlberg, died 1553 at Passau

JACOB ZIEGLER

Limewood, 58.5 × 44 cm. (23 × 17³/₈ in.) Inv. No. 1942

If there was nothing but this picture from which to form an opinion of the "Jacob Ziegler of Landau" whom, according to the inscription, Wolf Huber has portrayed, one could at any rate say that he was a humanist scholar, though one who wished to place his erudition directly at the service of mankind, instead of shutting himself away in his library. Clearly a fanatic, he will have been more of a teacher than a researcher, and almost more of a preacher than a teacher. Thanks to his intimate acquaintance with far-away times and places, with his books and his environment, he had learned by the autumn of his life to form a general view of things, to see them as a whole. Still full of resilience and spiritual energy, he here looks out at the world with grey, very irregular eyes, which still retain their twinkle, and send forth more light from within than they gather from without. After the eyes, the mobile, finely chiselled mouth is the most lively feature in this diaphanous, rectangular face framed by snowy hair and beard. The effect of the ghostlike transparency is enhanced by the black clothing, and the background also intensifies the expressiveness. On the right, the blue of the mountains passes almost imperceptibly into that of the sky, which grows still deeper towards the top; but on the left, the horizon is strongly marked where the dark plain meets the pale light of dawn.

There is no lack of information about Ziegler in the historical sources. Born about 1470–71 at Landau on the Isar, he probably began his higher education at the Cistercian monastery of Aldersbach in Lower Bavaria. In 1491, he entered Ingolstadt University, where, among others, the famous humanist Celtes was teaching. During nine years of study in the most varied fields, he first became a Master of Arts and subsequently a Bachelor of Theology. As such, he started lecturing in 1499–1500, but then suddenly broke off to embark, like most humanists, on a roving life, which took him to several German cities, to Moravia, to Hungary via Vienna, to Italy, where he visited Venice, Ferrara, and Rome, and finally back to Germany again. If at the start he concerned himself mainly with astronomy, mathematics, and geography, afterwards it was above all the great politico-religious problems of the age that engrossed him. Well informed on what was happening in the Empire and Italy, and in touch with Erasmus, Zwingli, Luther, Bucer, and Melanchthon, he soon came down unreservedly on the side of the Curia's enemies. In a series of extremely fierce libels against the Pope and the Emperor, he harshly criticized prevailing conditions, while, in another publication, he developed a grandiose scheme for the reconstruction of Church and Empire. The proposals made there regarding religion, politics, administration, military matters, sociology, education, and economics reveal Ziegler's truly versatile mind and unbounded love of the Christian religion and his German motherland. Nevertheless, like so many others, he was disappointed with the Reformation. After 1530, he turned away from the Protestants, and in 1541 arrived at Vienna University, where he taught in the theological faculty. He became Dean in 1543, but left the same year, when the constant Turkish menace was completely emptying the lecture rooms. Finally the Bishop of Passau, Wolfgang von Salm, received him hospitably into his palace, which he kept open to poets, scholars, and artists. There, he offered Ziegler, now over seventy, a tranquil close to his life.

At that time, Wolf Huber had already been working in Passau at the Bishop's court for a good thirty years, and had won an outstanding reputation among the artists of the Danube school as a painter of altarpieces, a portraitist, a wood-engraver, and a draughtsman. Just as the professors Cuspinian and Reuss once sat for the youthful Cranach, so now did the aged, experienced, yet far from weary Ziegler pose for the mature Huber, and he inspired one of the most impressive portraits of scholars known to us. It is traditional inasmuch as the frontal pose enjoyed a certain favour for likenesses of clerics and men of learning. On the other hand, the artist did not place any books before his subject to represent the latter's literary works, as was common in the case of tomb sculpture, either because he was depicting someone still alive, or perhaps because all Ziegler's publications were on the Index. Why did Huber paint this portrait? Was it intended for the Bishop, or even actually ordered by him? May Ziegler have destined it for Vienna University in memory of his activity as a teacher there? The obtrusive if brief inscription could suggest this. We do not know when the picture reached Vienna or entered the Gallery. Having been found in the depository in 1922, it was then put on show for the first time.

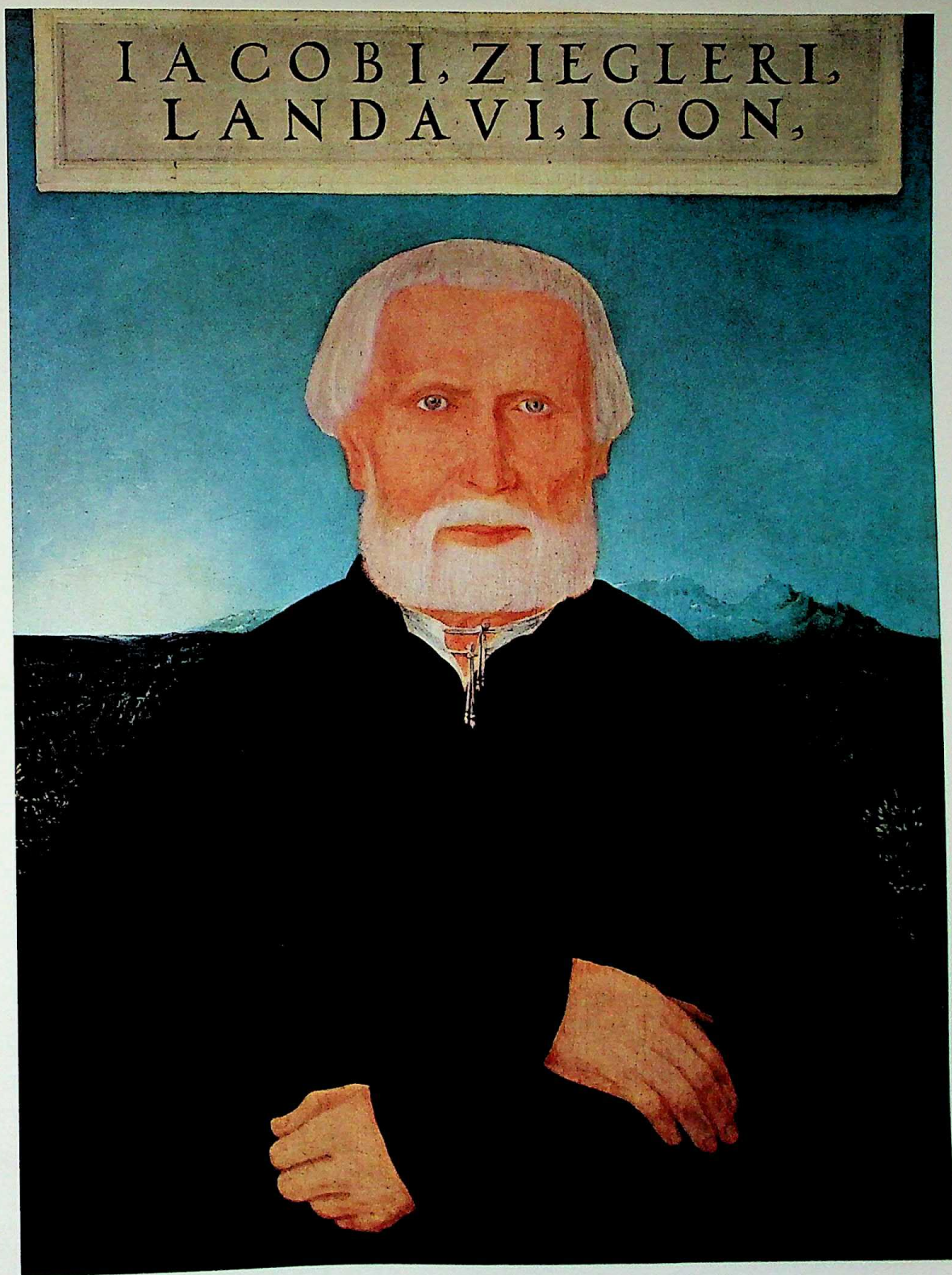


PLATE 25

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

*Born 1497 at Augsburg, died 1543 in London**JANE SEYMOUR, THIRD WIFE OF HENRY VIII*Oak, 65.5 × 47.5 cm. (25³/₄ × 18³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 881

On May 20, 1536, the day after Anne Boleyn's execution, Henry VIII took Jane Seymour as his third wife. Born round about 1509 (?) into a distinguished family of the landed nobility, the new queen had already been a lady-in-waiting at the time of Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn, so she knew her two predecessors very well, and certainly also the King. It is said that Jane was the only woman Henry really loved, and that he wanted to be buried at her side. On October 12, 1537, she bore him an heir, but died as a result of the birth on the 24th, a few days after the infant prince had been baptized.

All Jane's contemporaries praised her gentle nature, her modesty, and her radiant air. Her motto "Bound to obey and to serve" seems to hit off one of her essential traits. Chappuys, Charles V's ambassador, gave this sober account of her: "She is of medium height and nobody finds her particularly beautiful. Her complexion is very whitish, so that one may call her downright pallid. She is rather more than twenty-five years old..."

Holbein had already long been acknowledged by English high society in London as its leading portrait painter, when he became in 1535-36 "servant to the Kings Majesty". He retained this post for the rest of his life, and the likeness of the new queen, which was almost certainly painted in 1536 shortly after the marriage, and anyway not later than the beginning of 1537, is the earliest datable picture to have survived through which Holbein presented himself as the official painter of the English court. In all respects, it is an extraordinary work.

As was the custom, Holbein prepared for his portraits by making drawings from life. It has been rightly conjectured that on such occasions the painter took advantage of mechanical aids and made tracings on a pane of glass. The actual artistic qualities remained quite unaffected by this. Among Holbein's portrait drawings in the royal collection at Windsor is to be found the sketch, or rather the cartoon, for the "Jane Seymour". Though cut off directly below the hands, the figure is exactly the same size as in the painting. These drawings have often been compared with the well-known crayon portraits made by Clouet and his circle (see Plate 27), and this very confrontation reveals what is typical of Holbein's sheets: the unswerving sobriety and honesty, the seizing of a personality from the surface, the abhorrence of all subjective comment, the absence of anything modish and affected, in the sense of cutting a dash in the French manner with a tried and popular technique, the unconditionally subservient rôle of the drawing.

What was Holbein able to read in this face? Its features have only an appearance of simplicity, for there is something unfathomably reserved about the independent gaze of the two eyes and the very purposeful, knowing mouth, thin-lipped yet so lively. It may seem far easier to interpret the inimitable pose of the arms and the hands joined rather to one side—firm, dependable, housewife's hands. Here the finished work substantially transcends the drawing, just as in the elaboration of the costume and the rich but very unobtrusive jewellery. Only a small part of the painted adornment—perhaps the costly pectoral brooch with its Jesus monogram—was taken from life. Most of it is the artist's invention, though it could possibly have become reality later on. This includes the decorative motif of pearls and black diamonds set in gold, which is repeated identically in the necklace and girdle, on the head-gear, and around the neck-opening; the fine black embroidery at the wrists; and the design on the luxurious material of the undergarment.

As regards the colour-scheme, perhaps Holbein took his basic inspiration from the lady's celebrated, strikingly white complexion. He certainly wanted to show it to its very best advantage through his truly regal opposition of blue and silver to red and gold. This extremely choice colouring and the sumptuousness of every aspect of the painting help to make the Vienna panel stand out among the various versions of the portrait. Acknowledged to be by far the most beautiful, it is undoubtedly autograph.

As long ago as 1605, Van Mander saw the work at Amsterdam "in the Warmoesstraat". He particularly praised the costly patterned silver material of the undergarment, which was painted so skilfully, he thought, that one was bound to wonder "whether silver-leaf had not been laid underneath". From the Netherlands, the picture seems to have passed by way of Rudolph's collection at Prague into the Stallburg gallery at Vienna. It was certainly there in 1730, and is represented in Storffer's painted "inventory".



PLATE 26

JAKOB SEISENEGGER

*Born 1505 probably in Lower Austria, died 1567 at Linz**EMPEROR CHARLES V*Canvas, 205 × 123 cm. (80³/₄ × 48³/₄ in.) Signed and dated 1532 bottom right. Inv. No. A 114

During the spring of 1530, Pope Clement VII crowned Charles Emperor at Bologna, and we find them there again two years later, in November 1532, this time engaged in difficult, stubbornly fought negotiations that dragged on till the end of the following February. Charles's brother Ferdinand took this opportunity to send Jakob Seisenegger to Bologna with the task of portraying the Emperor.

Though only appointed Ferdinand's Court Painter the year before, on January 1, 1531, and first recorded as working for him in 1530, Seisenegger had during this short time already executed at least four portraits of Charles V, now all lost. Each showed the Emperor full length and life size, so the painter was well acquainted with his "model" before he ever arrived at Bologna. He was also undoubtedly aware of the importance of this exalted mission, for the fruit of his journey, the Vienna portrait, is an exceptional achievement in the field of Renaissance royal portraiture. It shows very little sign of Italian influence. If the use of oil on canvas and the loose, free brushwork seem to indicate a contact with North Italian painting (Brescia, Venice), the colour-scheme limited to exquisite harmonies of white-and-silver, yellow-and-gold, and brown, which appear still more refined alongside the green curtain and the reddish marble of the paving, is remarkably original. Above all, however, the whole conception of a full-length portrait of a ruler was something new and revolutionary in Italy at that period. In his likeness of Charles V, Seisenegger has developed this basic pattern, already prefigured north of the Alps, with an astonishing comprehension of the inner significance of the new rendering of form, and has given it a magnificent breadth. The frontally posed body and head turned rather to one side evince the subject's unshakeable self-confidence. Evolved in the same spirit as this imposingly ample form (wide above, narrow below, so that head and body both become wedge-shaped), the costume adds the no less exigent appeal of an extremely refined elegance and aristocratic air that is not an end in itself but the expression of an innate dignity commanding respect. The controlled indolence of the gestures—one hand placed loosely round the dagger, the other holding the collar of the big hunting dog, an ancient symbol of power—reveals a natural authority. No longer is it his badges of office that distinguish the sovereign, but his truly regal bearing.

As is well known, Seisenegger's likeness of the Emperor served Titian as a model for the famous portrait in the Prado. Obviously very soon after the present work, dated 1532, had been completed, Titian was commissioned to copy it, and his picture is responsible for the fact that the creation of the Vienna Court Painter is still very much underrated. People judge it by Titian's standard, which is quite unsuitable for Seisenegger's work. None-the-less, it is very interesting and instructive to confront the two portraits in all their dissimilarity. Putting it briefly, Titian has paid no attention to Seisenegger's firm, taut structure, thereby disrupting what is best in his model.

Particularly during the early years of his activity as Court Painter, Seisenegger travelled through half Europe carrying out official commissions (Augsburg, Innsbruck, Regensburg, Prague, Bologna, Vienna, Budweis, Nuremberg, Spain twice, the Netherlands, etc.). Then he established himself at Vienna, and finally settled at Linz. When later on, in one of his numerous petitions regarding payment for unremunerated work, he boasted that as early as 1532 he had turned down splendid offers from Charles V, the Duke of Alba, and later the Pope and other princely personages too, we may certainly believe him.

The portrait of Charles V only came to light again in the Vienna Gallery about fifty years ago.



PLATE 27

FRANÇOIS CLOUET

Born probably about 1505 at Tours, died 1572 at Paris

CHARLES IX OF FRANCE

Oak, 25 × 21 cm. (9⁷/₈ × 8¹/₄ in.) Dated 1561. Inv. No. 5638

After Henry II's unfortunate death in 1559, the result of a splinter from a lance penetrating his eye, his eldest son came to the French throne as Francis II. However, the new king himself died a year later, and his place was taken by Henry's second son, Charles, who was then only ten years old. As in the case of Francis, the queen-mother Catherine de Médicis acted as regent, and the young king continued to depend on her even when, at fourteen, he was declared of age. Apart from a certain fondness for music and song and, now and then, for literature as well, the biographers can find but few pleasant traits to record in the character of this late Valois ruler. It was he—admittedly under pressure from his entourage and above all from his mother—who unleashed the horrors of St Bartholomew's Night.

The tiny little portrait dates from the year after Charles's coronation, and shows him at the age of eleven, still in the flower of his boyhood. A contemporary would have been unlikely to see hints of dark forces in this smooth, unblemished face, though it is easy to read much into it with our knowledge of what was to come. However, the dominant characteristic of the image as a whole is its extreme elegance.

France and the French court were at an early date especially fertile soil for portrait-painting. In the sixteenth century, French portraiture was greatly invigorated and refined by the two Clouets: Jannet (Jean), an immigrant from the Low Countries who already worked as Court Painter to Francis I; and François, who after the death of his father in 1541, took over the latter's post as "peintre du roy et valet de chambre", and retained it during the reigns of Henry II, Francis II, and Charles IX. Under the leadership of these two artists, portraiture *au crayon*, which involved lightly tinting a black-chalk drawing with red chalk and heightening it where necessary with white, was particularly cultivated. At first, such drawings only served as preparatory studies for pictures executed in the painter's workshop, but they soon came to be valued for themselves. Even though the technique, which immediately became popular with artists and public alike, led to a certain fashionable uniformity, these chalk portraits have amazing vitality and great charm. A very large number of them can be connected on good grounds with Jannet and above all with François. Actual paintings, on the other hand, are extremely rare. Thus, the Vienna Gallery's likeness of Charles IX as a boy is, with its immaculate, enamel-smooth paint-surface, the soft, transparent modelling, the uncommonly delicate nuances of the pale complexion, and especially the rendering of the luxurious, fussily ornate costume, a highly precious individual masterpiece and an outstanding example of French portraiture taken as a whole.

The Gallery possesses another, later portrait from the same hand: a full-length of the king showing him life-size. It is the only one of this type by François to have survived, and, indeed, it constitutes a great rarity among French portraits in general, which are nearly always small. We cannot be quite certain of its date, as the lengthy inscription on it has been damaged and incorrectly restored. Nevertheless, the year should most probably be read as 1569, since this would accord with the age of the king, who is stated to be twenty in the inscription and looks about that in the actual image. Moreover, there was a special reason for having such a large, stately official portrait executed at that time. In 1570, the king married Maximilian II's daughter, and it is natural to suppose that the picture was painted in connection with the wooing of this Habsburg princess.

The marriage proved exceptionally important to the Vienna Gallery in another way as well. At the wedding ceremony, which took place at Speyer on October 22, 1570, the French king had himself represented by Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol, the uncle of Archduchess Elizabeth and founder of the Ambras collection. In return for this friendly act, Charles sent the Archduke some really magnificent gifts, Cellini's famous salt-cellar, the precious goblet of St Michael, the onyx jug, and a large fifteenth-century crystal jug, all entering Ferdinand's collection on that occasion. Perhaps the two royal portraits also arrived at Ambras then as presents from Charles. The large one was brought to Vienna very early in the eighteenth century, but the smaller one only entered the Belvedere gallery with the bulk of the Ambras collection at the beginning of the nineteenth.



PLATE 28

PIETER AERTSEN

Born 1509 at Amsterdam, died there 1575

STILL-LIFE

Oak, 60 × 101.5 cm. ($23\frac{5}{8} \times 39\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Signed and dated 1552. Inv. No. 6927

This picture has lost something of its spatial clarity through having its height reduced by about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. In particular, a fairly broad strip has been cut off the bottom, which means that the flagstone paving that draws the eye so forcefully into depth once extended further down. Owing to this reduction of the foreground, the opening through which one sees the Bible incident now seems rather low, crushed by the weight of masonry above it.

With its strong, objective colours, the still-life swells from left to right against the dark wall. Gripped between the bright perspective and the blue rectangle of the window, this multiplicity of forms only appears to be heaped up casually at first glance. Very soon, one becomes aware of an extremely careful arrangement whereby materials, shapes, and colours lead the eye from object to object. First, one's glance alights upon the pat of butter set slightly apart on a majolica plate and pierced by a pink. Butter and stem alike direct the eye a trifle inwards to the brown mustard-pot, the shiny pewter pot with a sloping spout, and the three rolls, after which it momentarily loses itself in the depths of the cupboard, beyond the sealed documents and gleaming silver goblets. Then the half-open door, its big iron lock very close to the spectator, and the double pouch topped by a curious grip impose an abrupt change of direction. The eye now moves up towards the pile of linen and the basket containing a jumble of lids and vessels. From here, it sets out on the return journey, and though the vase of flowers forms something of a caesura, one's attention is thereafter seized firmly by the great wedge-shaped leg of beef, which points imperiously to the left and, again, slightly inwards. It forms one of the still-life's two main accents, the other being the bright pat of butter. Only when it has explored this world of objects, so realistically portrayed yet so strangely romantic, does the eye become free to penetrate into depth.

Here the colouring is quite different. Light, very delicately modulated broken colours predominate, and out of them, as from some dream atmosphere, condense the figures of Christ and his listeners around the peculiar fireplace. The world of the spirit—and here we have the key to the picture—has been thrust into the background, as the foreground belongs to what is workaday and profane, to the heavy, the solid, the material, because it is this that humanity is mostly concerned with. On the architrave of the fireplace, the artist has recorded these words from the story of Mary and Martha: "Maria heeft wtuercoren dat beste deel" (Mary has chosen the best part: Luke x, 42).

The still-life is thus not an end in itself. All the same, the full and exact account of its components, which are described with such an interest in and understanding of different materials and their surface variance, makes this work a pure manifestation of Netherlandish art. Nowhere else did painters endeavour so early to make their scenes more alive and real by means of still-life details and genre motifs. Round about the middle of the sixteenth century what had formerly been incidental and subordinate moved to the centre of the stage, while the "subject" withdrew, and in so doing increased its impact, on account of the novelty of the arrangement. This reversal is Mannerist in the same way as the virtuosic apparent juxtaposition—particularly effective because surprising—of the very near and the relatively distant.

The trident stamped on the slip of paper against the cupboard is Pieter Aertsen's special mark. On the right, below the edge of the window, one can make out the date as July 25, 1552. The picture came to Vienna with Leopold Wilhelm's collection, and in the 1659 inventory it is listed as No. 262, "original by Long Peter". How it got into the hands of the minor Viennese art-dealer Artin at the beginning of the present century and then, in 1909, entered the noted collection of Dr A. Figdor is not known. In 1930, it was acquired from the Figdor collection for the Vienna Gallery, which also possesses, by Aertsen, a "Country Feast" dating from 1550 (Inv. No. 2365), a large picture of the Four Evangelists (Inv. No. 6812), and a market-scene with almost life-size half-length figures of a peasant and his wife (Inv. No. 960). The latter is a late work showing particularly clearly the ties between this Dutch painter and his Flemish nephew and pupil Buccelaer.

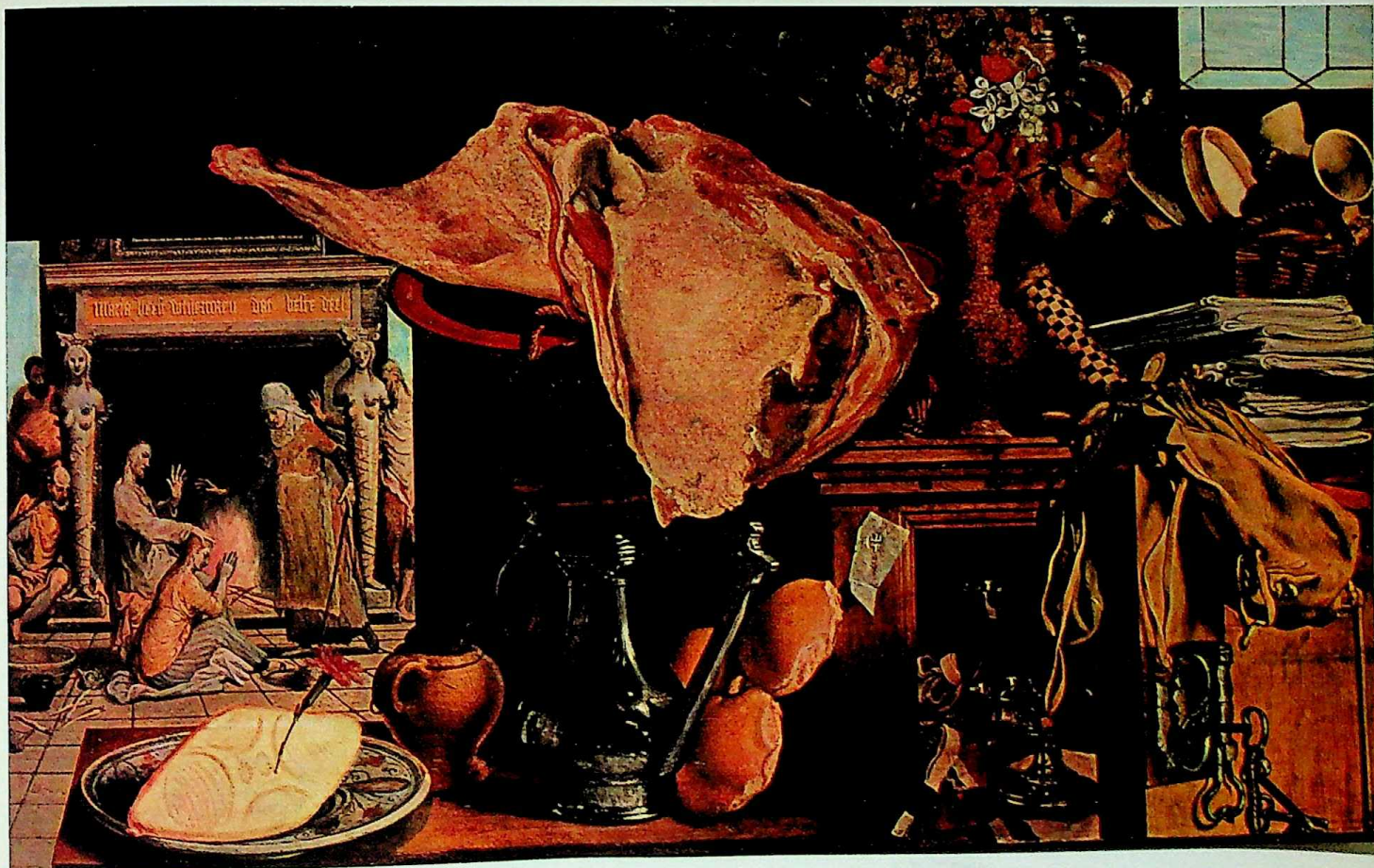


PLATE 29

JOACHIM BUECKELAER

Born 1530 at Antwerp, died there 1574

THE COOK

Oak, 112 × 81 cm. (44 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Dated 1574. Inv. No. 6049

This picture's connection with the still-life by Pieter Aertsen (Plate 28) is obvious. Here again, a little scene pushed right into the background, and once more showing Martha and Mary, in a way explains and justifies what is depicted in the foreground. At the same time, it gives this representation of a cook amidst her realm of poultry, fruit, meat, and fish its intense realism and bigness. However, the artistic and historical distance between the two panels is just as evident, and would be even if one did not know that the Aertsen dated from 1552 and the present work from 1574.

What is new about the latter perhaps appears most strongly and directly in the painterly execution. The *matière* is now extremely thin and transparent, the brushwork free, light, and fluid. In many places, the bold under-drawing, briskly set down in large strokes, shows through the paint. Furthermore, broad areas of the composition are embraced by sonorous colour-harmonies. The still-life half of the picture is a feast of yellow, red, and brown, from the chicken being lifted off the dish, across the cook's skirt and apron, to the basket containing meat and fish in the bottom right-hand corner. To the warm, sometimes fiery hues of this triangle, the cool colouring up above towards the right provides a contrast: the snow-white blouse with blue-grey shadows, the tints of the smooth, clean skin of the fine-looking girl's arms and face, the delicate greyish tones of the background, and the broken nuances of green, yellow, rose, and lilac of the Bible scene with little figures in the innermost room. Spatially as well, a significant difference between the two pictures is perceptible. In the panel under discussion, three spaces are arranged one behind the other, so that between the larder at the front and the distant dining-room, magnificently adorned with herms, cornices, and hangings, one sees an empty chamber with a smoking fireplace, a stone pavement, and a wooden ceiling. Nevertheless, the artist was obviously not very concerned about the effect of depth, for he has deliberately avoided spatial continuity and, instead, contrasted each unit rather gratuitously and violently with the next. On the other hand, the vertical and horizontal forms that limit these successive spaces were most important to him as elements of the picture structure, and they give it remarkable stability.

Dated but unsigned, the painting has been attributed to Joachim Bueckelaer. He is known to have been the pupil of his uncle Pieter Aertsen, who was more than twenty years older and worked at Antwerp between 1535 and 1556. During his early period, Bueckelaer followed his teacher very closely, especially in his choice of subjects, in his preference for still-lives and genre scenes with rustic, plebeian settings. Later, the influence of Venetian painting, of Titian's and Veronese's colour, is apparent, though it has not yet been possible to prove that Bueckelaer visited Italy. However well the time interval between the two painters may match the stylistic difference between the two pictures, there are prominent obstacles to ascribing "The Cook" to Bueckelaer—above all, its firm structure, which has no parallel in the work of the younger artist. Likewise, one would look vainly there for its suggestive relation of objects, forms, and colours, as in the piling up of fruit-basket, dish, and raised chicken on the table, the juxtaposition of bulging earthenware jug and plucked chicken's breast on the stool, or the succession of steep, pointed triangular shapes, which the apron repeats on a still larger scale, presented by the meat and fish in the big basket; but Aertsen's known pictures show many analogies with this richly imaginative interpretation of the subject. Besides, several variations of the theme itself—a life-size, or almost life-size cook in her kitchen or larder, handling poultry and surrounded by the elements of a still-life—appear among Aertsen's works, and, what is more, they date from the years after his sojourn at Antwerp. In point of fact, the respective *œuvres* of these two masters have not yet been sufficiently differentiated from each other to warrant a final judgement. If, however, it did become possible to show that "The Cook", which in the fluid handling already foreshadows Rubens, really is a late Aertsen, then the entire range of a development running parallel to Pieter Bruegel's could be surveyed in the Vienna Gallery.

The panel was not bought for the Gallery till 1907, having previously been in a private collection at Graz.



PLATE 30

PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born towards 1530 at Breda, died 1569 at Brussels

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Oak, 114 × 155 cm. (44⁷/₈ × 61 in.) Signed and dated 1563. Inv. No. 1026

After the first list of Noah's descendants, among whom Nimrod is conspicuous as "a mighty one", there follows in the Bible (Genesis xi, 1-9) the remarkable story of Babel. It tells of how men resolved to build this city "and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven", and of how the Lord punished them for their presumptuousness by confounding the language of all the earth. This Tower of Babel became a symbol of human arrogance that was already well known to literature and the figurative arts at an early date. The celebrated miniatures in the Duke of Bedford's Book of Hours, a fifteenth-century work, and especially the one in the Grimani Breviary with the rectangular tower and the builders' yard in the foreground are the most important forerunners of Bruegel's scene. There is a smaller, somewhat earlier rendering of the subject by the artist in the Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen at Rotterdam, and the sources also refer to one on ivory—evidently a miniature—which Bruegel probably executed during his stay at Rome. The big Vienna Gallery picture, which dates from 1563, directly after the painter moved to Brussels, is undoubtedly the most splendid visualization of the subject in the entire history of art.

Bruegel has devoted all his interest and most of the available space to the gigantic tower. Everything else, and that includes the scale-setting "introductory" scene of Nimrod's visit in the foreground, serves to heighten one's impression of immensity. Even the tiniest detail of the edifice has been conceived in all respects with the utmost precision and realism, and it is this that makes its enormous size so credible. The very incompleteness of the structure brings it to life, for we see it coming into being over and around its great core of rock, and growing upwards to dizzy heights, where men, ladders, and scaffolding stand out minute against the sky. Bruegel clearly studied this system of construction very thoroughly in the Colosseum at Rome, though he introduced different external forms. The Romanesque and in part Gothic elements, such as the massive buttresses, are certainly intended to produce a specially archaic, primitive effect. Probably also inspired by direct impressions of the Colosseum is the very uneven state of progress, results of pillage and destruction having here been transformed into signs of growth and development. On the left, the stone exterior is almost complete right up to the top, apart from some minor damage at the base, due apparently to flooding and already being repaired—one of the many episodes from the building history that are recorded in the picture. The right side, on the other hand, lags far behind. Most notable, however, is the yawning gap towards the front, above the rocky eminence, where the two empty arches at the centre of the picture regard us in a positively sinister way, so that we are suddenly seized with doubt and forboding, even though all appears to be going according to plan.

Around the architectural colossus, human life is pulsing, but it is largely at the service of this vast enterprise. To the left extends a city like Antwerp, with magnificent churches and palaces that rise above the jumble of steep-roofed houses belonging to patricians and merchants. To the right, one sees the port, its broad quay strewn with building materials, and, in the shadow of the tower, another part of the city. One does not know whether this city has grown up because of the tower or whether the tower, weighing down on it as an enormous burden, is slowly crushing it to death.

The Vienna "Tower of Babel" was almost certainly one of the sixteen Bruegels, including the famous "Series of the Months", that are known to have formed part of Nicolas Jonghelinck's collection at Antwerp in 1566. During that year, they enabled their owner to stand security *vis-à-vis* the city council for somebody else's debt. It would seem that the paintings were afterwards forfeited to the city, as in 1594 it presented "six panels of the twelve months" to the governor, Archduke Ernest. In 1604, Van Mander wrote that he had seen two pictures of the Tower of Babel in the possession of Emperor Rudolph II, one large and the other smaller. While the latter is no doubt to be identified with the Rotterdam version, the former was certainly the painting now at Vienna. According to the 1659 inventory, it arrived there in Leopold Wilhelm's collection.

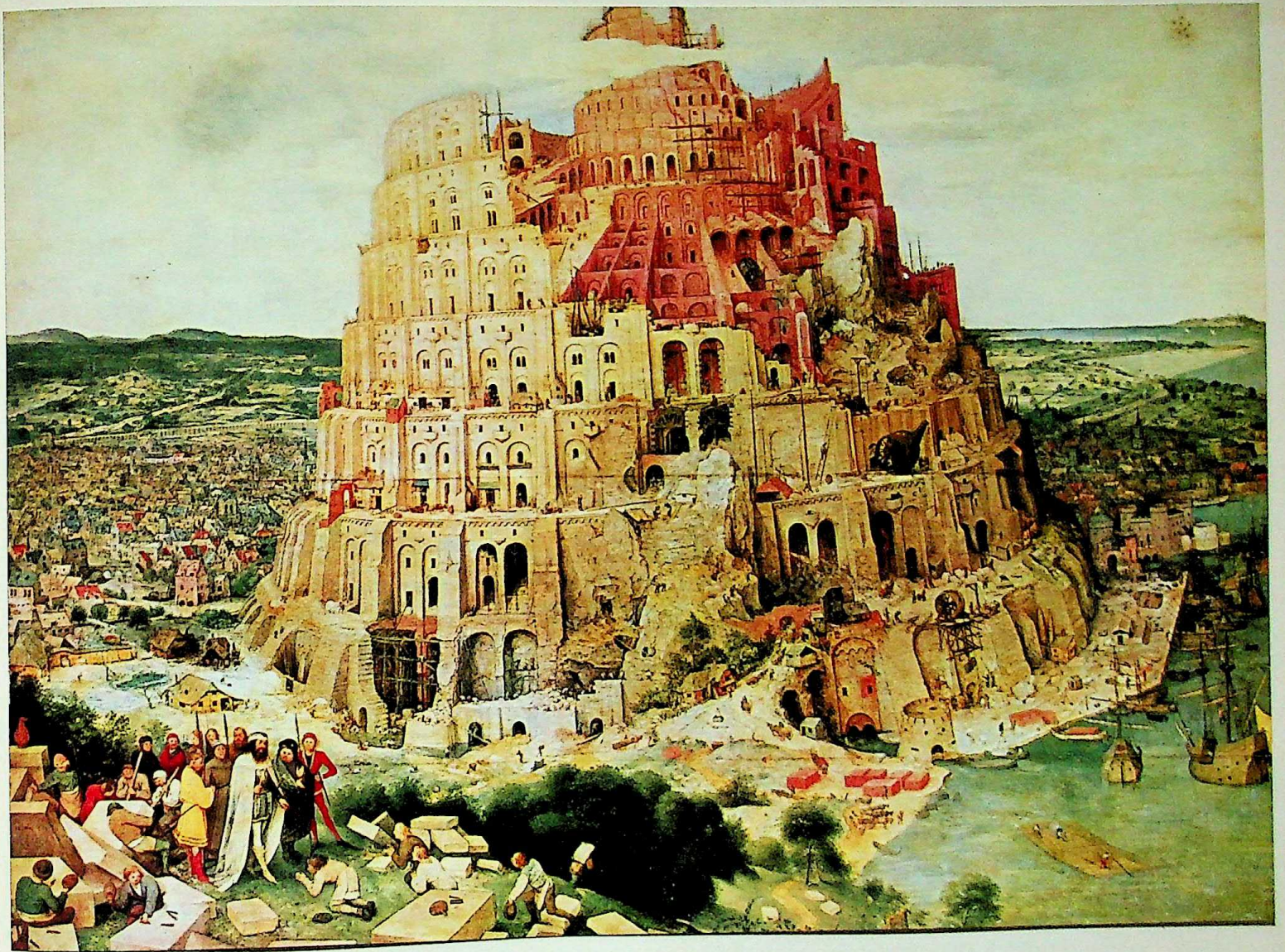


PLATE 31

PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born towards 1530 at Breda, died 1569 at Brussels

THE RETURN OF THE HUNTERS

Oak, 117 × 162 cm. (46 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 63 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Signed and dated 1565. Inv. No. 1838

Bruegel's "Series of the Months" (in the Vienna Gallery, "The Return of the Hunters", "The Gloomy Day", and "The Return of the Herd"; in the Metropolitan Museum at New York, "The Corn Harvest"; in the National Gallery at Prague, "Hay-making") still poses problems for the art historian. One of the fundamental points on which agreement has not yet been reached concerns the original number of these pictures. Starting out from what has survived and giving weight to the fact that in 1594 Archduke Ernest received six "Month" pictures as a gift from the city of Antwerp, some scholars maintain that the series has always consisted of only half a dozen panels, each representing two months. Others, on the contrary, argue no less convincingly that each painting represents a single month and that there were at first twelve.

Undoubtedly the most popular of the series, "The Return of the Hunters" (or "Winter"), is among the most impressive of all pictures. Its unusually firm, taut composition built up of verticals, horizontals, and diagonals makes it exceptionally easy for us to take in such undreamt-of riches, to savour fully this snow- and ice-covered expanse, and to observe the myriad details. With a positively iron grip, the pictorial order compels the beholder who travels through this landscape to follow the route laid down by the artist. It prevents him at every step from getting lost among the details, and gives him a sense of complete security. In this connection, mention has time and again been made of the four tree-trunks that cross the hill in the foreground and establish a powerful diagonal leading into depth. One immediately sees and feels how much the accompanying procession of hunters and dogs re-enforce this guiding line that thrusts towards the background. The high-gabled house on the left is the picture's largest complex of colours, and it also attracts one through its shape. This passage gains additional interest from the brightly blazing fire, in which, it is thought, a pig is being singed.

The formal clarity of individual objects likewise contributes decisively to the picture's impressiveness, and this goes for the houses, trees, and bushes just as for the men and animals; for the richly detailed figures of the foreground just as for the tiny ones in the distance. Against the steel-blue sky, the grey-green ice, and the white snow, these forms look like cut-out silhouettes, and every contour imprints itself on the memory with all its precision. Yet what probably does most to make this an unforgettable work of art is its unity. Everything combines to produce one single magnificent effect: the limited action, made up of incidents occurring almost silently beside each other; the space, which here is confined, with a residue of living warmth, and there widens out as cold, bleak distance; and the colouring, which still has vigour in the houses, animals, and human beings on the left, but grows chill in the frosty green, blue, white, and grey on the right. This perfect unity expressing the mood of a season is Bruegel's greatest achievement as initiator of the new landscape painting.

The "Series of the Months" was commissioned by the Antwerp art-lover Nicolas Jonghelinck. Since four of the survivors bear the date 1565, one may assume that the whole set was executed during the one year. It has been conjectured that the paintings were conceived as a kind of frieze above wood-panelling. If so, then "Winter" plainly began it, and this would give the line of trees and particularly the procession of hunters and dogs an added significance as a kind of initial at the very start. Moreover, one of these dogs is the only being in the entire picture who turns towards the spectator, giving him a look of unutterable gloom.

As already mentioned (see notes on Plate 30), Jonghelinck apparently did not enjoy possession of the "Months" for long, since they shortly passed to the city of Antwerp as a forfeited pledge. By way of Archdukes Ernest and Leopold Wilhelm, who were both governors of the Netherlands, all the five panels listed above ended up at Vienna, according to the 1659 inventory. It is not known when "Hay-making" became separated from the rest. Like "Winter" and many other pictures from the Gallery, "The Corn Harvest" was carried off to France in 1809, but in 1815 it was not returned. When "Winter" got back from Paris, it spent a considerable time in the depository together with "The Gloomy Day", and it is only known to have been in the Gallery again since 1884.



PLATE 32

PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born towards 1530 at Breda, died 1569 at Brussels

THE PEASANT WEDDING

Oak, 114 × 163 cm. (44⁷/₈ × 64¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 1027

In the present, strictly chronological rearrangement of Bruegel's paintings at the Vienna Gallery, it is easy to follow the main trends of an evolution that was concentrated in a single decade. An ever deeper understanding of both man and the countryside about him, an ever wiser view of the world, produce a progressive consolidation of the content from one picture to the next. Diversity steadily gives way to unity, richness to monumentality and order. Early works ("The Fight between Carnival and Lent", 1559; "Children's Games", 1560) presenting countless individually symbolic figures strewn about the picture surface with almost equal emphasis are confronted by two of the very latest, where figures carefully graded in size according to the laws of perspective derive their meaning from that of the whole: "The Peasant Wedding" and "The Peasant Dance". Related in subject and artistically very close to each other, these certainly both belong to about 1568, though neither is signed or dated. The impossibility of identifying the groom in the wedding scene and certain oddities about the "bride" have given rise to doubt as to whether this picture is correctly titled, and it has been suggested that the latter figure is allegorical. She may, for example, be a Munificence set amid eaters and drinkers embodying sinful intemperance; or more plausibly, perhaps, be "acting" some traditional rôle connected with the harvest.

Such symbols were, however, of secondary importance to the mature Bruegel, whose real concern was to assert in pictorial terms truths about humanity. Thus, it is much more profitable to examine the underlying structure, which gives the composition not only its consistence but its life, and to expose the spatial arrangement and the paths established for the eye; for it is they that introduce one to the true artistic content. The way in which the recession of the table has been made plain when so little of the object can actually be seen by the spectator is in itself a masterly feat. One cannot help contrasting it with those Italian solutions of the problem where the table's front edge has been left free so as to achieve a clearer spatial effect. With late Bruegels, it is first and foremost the human beings who create the space. In the present work, the main lines leading into depth run from right to left, which means counter to the direction in which a picture is usually read. However, the actual composition does of course unfold from left to right, starting in the corner occupied by the "still-life" of jugs. Related through their isolation and bright colouring, the pair of musicians and the pair of figures carrying flat cakes have each been placed parallel to one side of the table, in such a way that the blue-coated servant constitutes the foremost angle pier of the whole construction. Between his red cap and that of the important link figure passing plates, one's eye is drawn violently and directly from the servant's clumsy right shoe in the very foreground to the "leading lady" on the other side of the table: the so-called bride.

To get even an approximate idea of the picture's compositional refinement and richness of content, one must take the trouble to follow the entire line of guests in their sequence and combination to the far end of the table. From there, one returns along the other side, noting how each head becomes stiller, calmer, more serious till one reaches the old man in the high-backed chair, the monk, and finally the puzzling, highly expressive profile of the "lord". This forms a reposeful conclusion, but at the same time it is very closely related to the figure pouring wine on the far left, where one began reading the picture. Moreover the stream of yellow liquid passing from the big to the little jug seems to have a certain connection with the flowing yellow sheaves high up on the right.

Along with the "Months", paintings like "The Peasant Wedding" or "The Peasant Dance" earned this artist the name "Peasant Bruegel". The countryman had already long been subject-matter for art, above all in calendar pictures and graphic works. As in literature, he started as a figure of fun—the simpleton, the booby, the fool—but he was also an integral part of nature. Like growth and decay, his activities announced the ever-repeated succession of the seasons. In Bruegel's times, much the same view was taken of the rustic, though he was already sometimes seen as containing the primeval force of a people. When Bruegel painted him, he thought not just of the peasant but of the man.

"The Peasant Wedding" was probably acquired in 1594 by Archduke Ernest, the most important Bruegel collector apart from Rudolph II: he also owned "Children's Games", six of the "Months", and "The Conversion of St Paul". Later, it came into the possession of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, and, with his collection, it passed to the Vienna Gallery.



PLATE 33

JAN BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born 1568 at Brussels, died 1625 at Antwerp

THE TEMPTATION OF ST ANTHONY

Copper, 20.9 × 29 cm. (8 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 667

The name "Bruegel" will always call to mind in the first place the painter of country-folk. His two sons, Pieter the younger and Jan the elder, are usually seen only in relation to him, and are granted nothing better than the thankless rôle of satellites in his shadow. Naturally, this view by no means does justice to the personal achievement of either artist, but it is particularly desirable that the younger son, Jan, should be largely dissociated from his father, who died when he was only a year old. The boy grew up in Brussels at the home of his maternal grandmother, the miniaturist Mayken Verhulst Bessemer, who taught him the rudiments of painting—in water-colours, we are told. She was the widow of Pieter Coeck van Aelst, who had died as long ago as 1550. A painter and architect of high repute, Coeck had been particularly noted as a designer of festival decorations, tapestries, and the like. According to Van Mander, Pieter Bruegel the Elder was trained in his workshop, where he used to carry his future wife, Coeck's daughter, about in his arms.

On leaving this artistic and rather quaint environment, Jan first went to Antwerp, in order, it is said, to learn oil-painting there; but while still very young, he set off on a long journey, which took him through Cologne to Italy. He is known to have been at Naples in 1590 and at Rome in 1593-94. 1596 saw him in Milan at the court of Cardinal Federico Borromeo, who became his first great patron and with whom he regularly kept in touch even from Antwerp. In a letter of recommendation, the prelate extolled the young painter's great artistic gift and honesty. It was thanks to these characteristics that, on returning home and becoming a master at Antwerp in 1597, Jan rapidly achieved great social and economic success. To all his other dignities and privileges, he added in 1609 the title of Court Painter to Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, who governed the southern Netherlands. He received commissions from every side and was a close friend of Rubens, who had a genuine regard for him. In short, his destiny was controlled by an uncommonly lucky star, until the plague carried him off in 1625 together with three of his ten children.

Jan's painting shows great variety. Almost without exception, his pictures are either small or very small indeed, and one's mind inevitably turns to his earliest training. However, the predilection of the times, and of princely collectors in particular, for what was delicate, dexterous, and exceedingly refined should not be overlooked. Scenes of hell and temptation had a certain place among Jan's many subjects, mainly, it would seem, during his early period. Significantly, these pictures recall the early works of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, which in their turn stem from the work of Hieronymus Bosch. At bottom, therefore, Jan's reference is a broad one to the art of the preceding generations.

Very typical of this kind of picture, the Vienna Gallery's "Temptation of St Anthony" shows how such borrowing is nothing more than a dim recollection, in the use of ideas never quite forgotten. Moreover there is a big difference as regards both content and form. Whereas Bosch relentlessly depicts spectres from hell and nightmarish visions that immediately trap and involve the beholder, a painting by Jan Bruegel is more of a theatre-scene constructed on a stage for the public to enjoy from a distance. The setting, the human beings, and the tormenting demons are now much more naturalistic or plausible, but for that very reason they lose something of their persuasive power. To make up for this, such a picture aims at being hyper-refined and at fascinating through the almost over-subtle beauty of its execution and especially of its colours. Here, they glow magically out of the darkness; but the loveliest, most enchanting thing of all amid these infernal fireworks is the silvery moon. It shines brightly high up in the heavens behind the trees, a pledge of truly godlike constancy.

The painting probably belonged to Leopold Wilhelm, as there is "a small night piece in oil on copper showing the temptation of St Anthony—Original by an unknown master" listed in the 1659 inventory of the Archduke's collection. The Belvedere catalogue of 1783 already gives the correct author, whose name appears on the picture anyway. Carried off to Paris in 1809, it returned to Vienna in 1815. The Gallery possesses another notable "night piece" of a similar kind—an even richer one with innumerable figures—in its "Aeneas Visiting the Underworld" (Inv. No. 817). This perhaps belonged to Rudolph II, but the Belvedere catalogue gives the first certain reference to it. The "Crucifixion" (Inv. No. 627) may also be added here.



PLATE 34

JAN BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born 1568 at Brussels, died 1625 at Antwerp

THE ROAD TO MARKET

Copper, 18.5 × 25.5 cm. (7 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 10 in.) Signed and dated 1603. Inv. No. 6328

Landscape painting is another major field of art that Jan Bruegel the Elder cultivated and developed. Jan's "Temptation of St Anthony" (see Plate 33) and other compositions in which figures are prominent have little to do with his father's art, and his landscape style cannot simply be traced back to it either. If there is any connection at all, it is with those early drawings of Pieter's that led up to the bulk of his paintings. The magnificent statements he made about the world and mankind in his late pictures were so personal and individual that they could not be developed directly by others. Much more fruitful stimuli and points of departure were offered by the landscapes of Hans Bol, Paul Bril, Lucas van Valckenborch, or Gillis van Coninxloo.

Besides landscapes by Jan Bruegel that are positively overrun with human beings and animals, such as his late "Village on the River" (Inv. No. 9102), the Vienna Gallery has some in which man very largely withdraws in the face of nature, and almost disappears. This is true, for example, of "Mountain Landscape with the Temptation of Christ" (Inv. No. 1076), wooded and richly detailed, or of "Forest Landscape" (Inv. No. 1072). "The Road to Market" comes midway between these extremes. As well as being an exquisitely painted little cabinet picture that can be reproduced here almost full size, it is a specially characteristic work, and clearly reveals what is new in Jan's conception of landscape.

Our first impression of it is an extremely happy one. Everything exhales unqualified cheerfulness, and the whole wide world apparently exists only to please and to enchant. Even the peasants have been relieved of the burden of their toil, and they now have nothing to do, it would seem, except add the final touch to this universal splendour with the bright colours of their clothes. Yet here again it is an ingenious construction and a perfect interplay of form and colour that awaken our sense of joyous mergence in the vast expanse of nature.

The Milanese Gianpaolo Lomazzo, who was the most famous treatise-writer of the late sixteenth century, explains in his directions for painting a landscape how the space must be opened up into depth with the aid of a brown foreground, a green middle distance, and a blue background; and how one must introduce the stirrings of the vegetation, and include not just one but several trees, with their branches and foliage overlapping so that they form groups. At this point, Jan's little picture may come to mind, though one is bound to acknowledge that the artist has already progressed beyond such ideas. Of Lomazzo's three colour-zones, nothing really remains but an enchanting blue distance; and even this has been given a new, very rich diversity by the light, which, brightest and almost dazzling on the left behind the tree-tops, falls through rents in the clouds to form patches on the countryside. In the foreground, a green that grows stronger in the foliage and down in the valley, where it penetrates the blue, mingles with lively reddish and yellowy hues, which themselves continue across the green on the hill to the left. Conversely, the blue and white of the background come to the front in the figures, combining gaily with the other colours.

It has repeatedly been said that by reducing the dimensions of his pictures as compared with those of his father, Jan also made their content less substantial, slighter, and, in effect, smaller. One could perhaps claim instead—with all the necessary qualifications—that the diminished size and more tenuous "matter" actually promoted the emergence of a new relationship with nature. As the space opened up in every direction and the figures came increasingly to play the ancillary rôle of guides directing the eye about this space, the actual landscape became more important; and with its growing independence, it lost its old severity. People now sought in it—as a reaction, one might say—the sunny, paradisaical, Arcadian side of the world, which Rubens, too, presented in the scenery of his early works. Man infused his yearnings, but also his human feelings, into landscape, which opened its doors to poetry.

"The Road to Market" has a companion-piece in the contemporary "Village Street", which is likewise at the Vienna Gallery. The quite considerable structural difference between them is due to the fact that they are repeats of compositions dating from separate periods. Several replicas exist in either case. The two little Vienna pictures come from the C.W. Hollitscher collection at Berlin, and were only acquired in 1918.

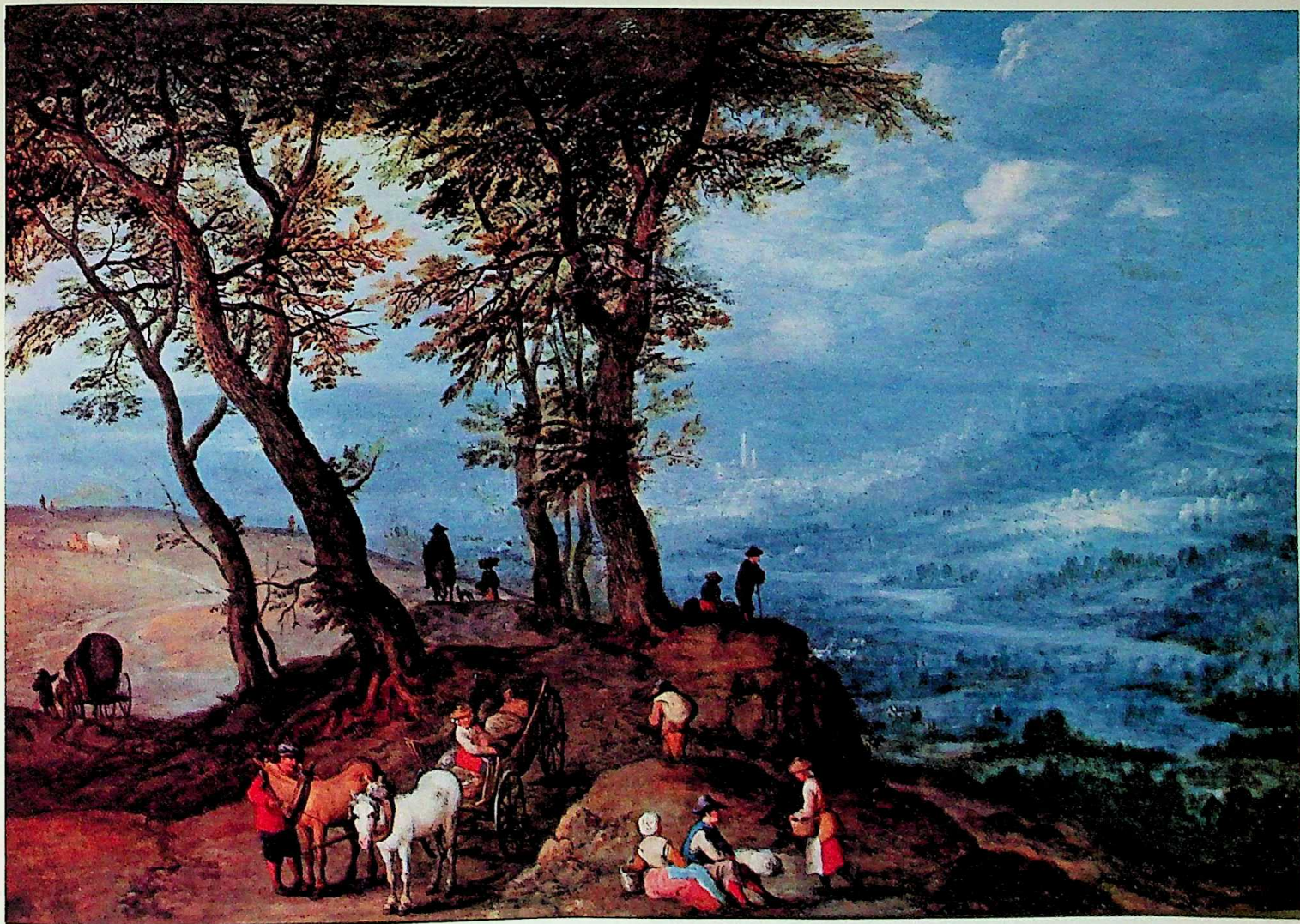


PLATE 35

JAN BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Born 1568 at Brussels, died 1625 at Antwerp

THE BIG BUNCH OF FLOWERS

Oak, 98 × 73 cm. (38⁵/₈ × 28³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 570

Jan Bruegel the Elder is supposed to have been given the name "Velvet Bruegel" because, as a rich and successful artist, he showed a preference in his clothing for expensive materials. However, he is also known as "Flower Bruegel", since he was particularly fond of painting flower-pieces and was one of the earliest, if not the very first, to execute this type of picture, which became so popular throughout the Low Countries. It is true that flowers were already depicted in, say, Annunciations or in illuminated manuscripts—especially Netherlandish books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; but they first appeared as an independent subject round about 1600, and it was in pictures by Jan Bruegel the Elder (and also by Boschaert and Savery) that they did so.

In Jan's correspondence with his patron Cardinal Federico Borromeo, there are many informative references to his flower painting. He vaunts its subtlety, declaring that "nothing painted more delicately and assiduously in oils has ever been seen", and that "never have so many rare and various flowers been depicted, and with such diligence". Repeatedly he points out that all his blooms are painted after nature; and, having received urgent enquiries from Milan, he excuses himself by saying that it all depends on the flowers. On one occasion, he begs the cardinal to wait until the many blooms that will be seen in the picture have opened. On another, he writes that, in order to look at certain flowers that are unavailable at Antwerp, he will first have to visit Brussels. Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella had, in fact, given Jan permission to study the plants in their garden there. (This was the period of the first botanical gardens, such as the one at Leyden. Scientists and growers, merchants and amateurs all took a passionate interest in flowers—especially the tulip, which had just come to Europe from Turkey, and reached the Netherlands by way of Vienna.) Another passage from a letter sheds light on the effect that Jan intended to achieve, and on the attitude of mind that lay behind this time-consuming activity. "It will be a lovely sight in winter," he writes, adding modestly: "Some of the colours almost match nature." He also says: "Among the flowers, I have painted a gem with beautiful medals and rarities from the sea"; and he leaves it to the cardinal to judge "whether the flowers do not surpass gold and jewels".

There are three valuable examples at the Vienna Gallery of Jan's work as a flower painter: a "Small Bunch of Flowers in an Earthen Vessel", with a coin bearing the date 1599 on the ground (Inv. No. 548); a somewhat larger "Bunch of Flowers in a Blue Vase", in which an iris stands out black and mysterious amid bright tulips and soft-tinted roses (Inv. No. 558); and what is known as "The Big Bunch of Flowers". Its size, its technical refinement, the variety and number of its blooms, and the richness of its composition make the latter a masterpiece of its kind.

The artist did not think of representing a real bunch. Instead, he composed one as he fancied it, arbitrarily mixing flowers of different seasons, those of the garden with those of the field, indigenous with exotic blooms. It is made even more lively by a host of insects and molluscs: butterflies, cockchafers, grasshoppers, flies, snails, a dragon-fly. Only a long and minute analysis will, of course, disclose the true riches of a work containing such a multiplicity of shapes and colours. Here they combine, there they stand apart, and there again they make up sequences that in their turn form wider groups, out of which the general composition develops. One's eye never wearies of circling the bunch. It readily follows the ascent of the flowers on the left side, and then comes down step by step on the right, where there are fewer details to arrest it, and everything is less closely meshed. Again and again, it returns to enjoy the beauty of the little floral stars at the edge of the wooden tub. By introducing such inventions and conceits, Jan prepared much of the ground for subsequent Flemish and Dutch flower painting, as the majority of his motifs lived on till into the eighteenth century.

Many versions of this composition exist, and their quality varies (Munich, Amsterdam, etc.). "The Big Bunch of Flowers" was already in Archduke Leopold Wilhelm's collection, and, what is more, as an "original by Bruegel the Younger".

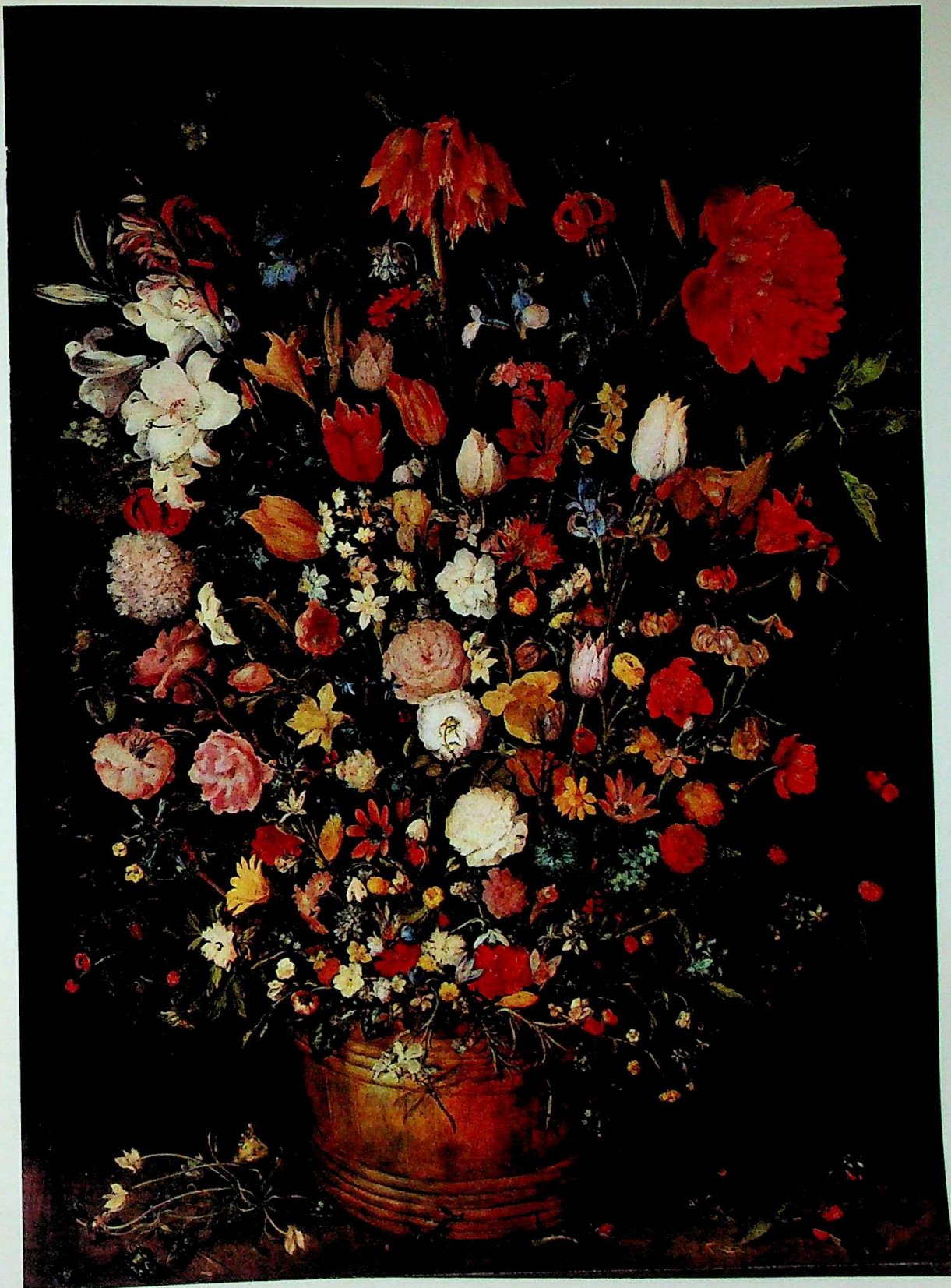


PLATE 36

ROELANDT SAVERY

Born 1576 at Courtrai, died 1639 at Utrecht

LANDSCAPE WITH ANIMALS

Oak, 35 × 49 cm. (13³/₄ × 19¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 1091

*Het scheen dat Saverij Natuera overtreften,
 Als hij afbeelden rotszen, bosschen, beest of blom,
 Dies Rodolph en Mathias (Keysers) hem verheften,
 Het tirols wonder wesen deelt hij neerlandt om,
 Natuer bevrees dat hij in als haer moght verwinnen,
 Benam hem 't leven door verstroinge der sinnen...*

(It seems that Savery excelled nature, / when he painted mountains, woods, animals, and trees. / For this reason the Emperors Rudolph and Matthias exalted him. / He revealed to the Netherlands the wonders of the Tyrol. / Nature, fearing that he might prevail over her in this, / took away his life by depriving him of his senses.)

These opening lines of a poem composed in 1647, eight years after Savery's death, constitute an accurate brief biography of this Flemish artist who early on emigrated to Holland, and continued to be something of a wanderer. From about 1604, he was working in Prague at the court of Rudolph II, on whose orders he visited the Tyrol to draw landscapes there. After Rudolph's death in 1612, Emperor Matthias employed Savery as *Kammermaler* at Vienna. He is not known to have been back permanently in the Netherlands before 1618, and even then his ties with Vienna do not seem to have been broken.

The most important influence on Savery's art came from Jan Bruegel the Elder. Particularly in the wooded and rocky landscapes that he executed during the first decade of the seventeenth century, drawing on his experience of Tyrolean mountain scenery, Savery's way of painting comes confusingly close to Jan's. Among other works from that period, the Vienna Gallery possesses a delightful "Mountain Landscape with a Fruit-seller" (1609; Inv. No. 1081), in which the minutely detailed clump of trees in the foreground is just as captivating as the fabulous view of the blue distance; and a "Mountain Landscape with Woodcutters" (1610; Inv. No. 957) showing rugged rocks, thundering torrents, and dangerous mountain paths above wild ravines. Pictures like these in their turn influenced Allart van Everdingen.

In the works he painted towards the end of the sixteen-twenties, Savery deviates visibly from his model, and, with a light, vitreous, strikingly varied palette, goes his own way. The division into colour-zones, which Jan Bruegel increasingly blurred, is emphasized and enriched in a Mannerist fashion. Between the brown at the very front and the green beyond there appears a light, very effective zone dominated by a pale yellow, whereas the blue shrinks to a narrow strip in the background and is reserved almost entirely for the sky. Characteristic examples in the Vienna Gallery of this late style are the "Landscape with Birds" of 1628 (Inv. No. 1082) and "Paradise" dating from the same year (Inv. No. 1003).

"Landscape with Animals" stands between the two groups, and was executed at the end of the second decade. In it, Savery's art has attained its greatest pictorial richness, and already clearly reveals his personal touch. Jan Bruegel's influence has begun to decline, although this combination of animal painting and landscape is prefigured by his scenes of paradise. The great scientific interest at this period in every sphere of nature, and the zoological gardens then being founded at the courts were important incentives for such pictures. Savery proceeded very much as Jan did when putting together his flower-pieces. A delight in the many species and genera, and a taste for playing around with nature determined the choice, creatures common and rare, domestic and wild, native and exotic all being mixed together. Here, it is the music of Orpheus that has occasioned the peaceful, paradisial gathering; and it is the Thracian women, falling upon the poet with stones and spears to take vengeance for his scorn, who cause the tumult that is just beginning to spread among the animals. The dark area over the subterranean vault in the foreground makes one particularly sensitive to the soft light enveloping the ruin on the left, beyond the shady arch. This grey-blue luminosity is stronger on the right, where it bathes the angular, overgrown remains of a tower or temple, which attract the eye even more. Before it extends an already almost empty meadow in which one can discern the little figure of Orpheus, absorbed in his music. It is astonishing how much of Ovid has found its way into the picture, how literally the painter has interpreted the poet. What began as an "excuse" has ended, thanks to the romantic figuration, as the true heart of the composition. Though the work was probably painted for Emperor Matthias, the first certain reference to it is in the 1783 catalogue of the Belvedere gallery.

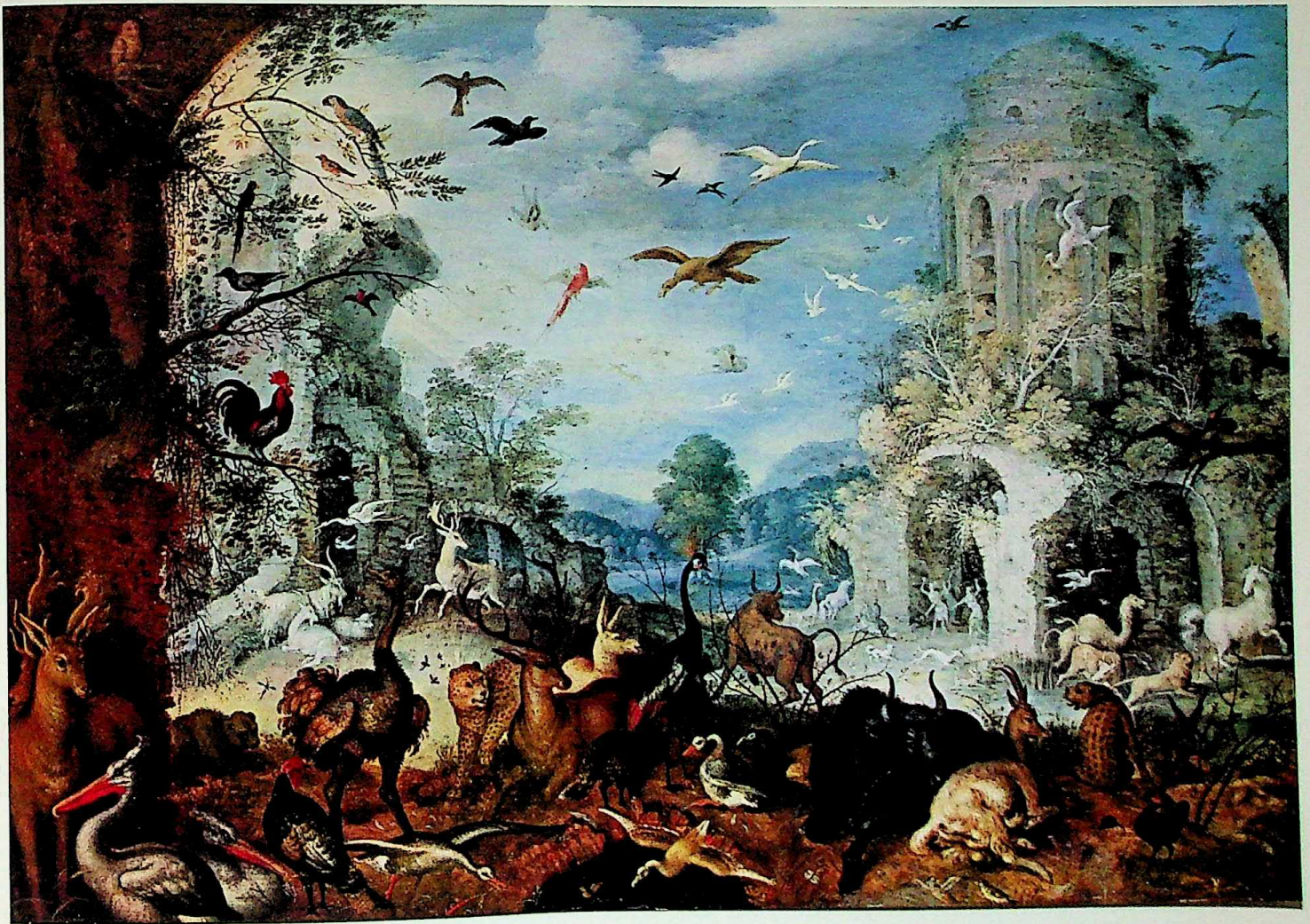


PLATE 37

BARTHOLOMÄUS SPRANGER

Born 1546 at Antwerp, died 1611 at Prague

VENUS AND ADONIS

Canvas, 163 × 104.3 cm. (64¹/₈ × 41¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 2526

Under Rudolph II (born 1552, Emperor from 1576, died 1612), the Imperial court at Prague became one of the chief centres of European art and culture. This outstanding collector with a rare passion for art managed to assemble there the best goldsmiths, gem-cutters, sculptors, and painters of the day. Working in mutual dependency or at least in contact with one another, these men developed a highly original style, which for refinement, worldliness, and elegance really only bears comparison with the Mannerism of the School of Fontainebleau. (In its later phase, this court style evolved in France by Rosso, Primaticcio, and other Italians was not inconsiderably influenced by Spranger himself.)

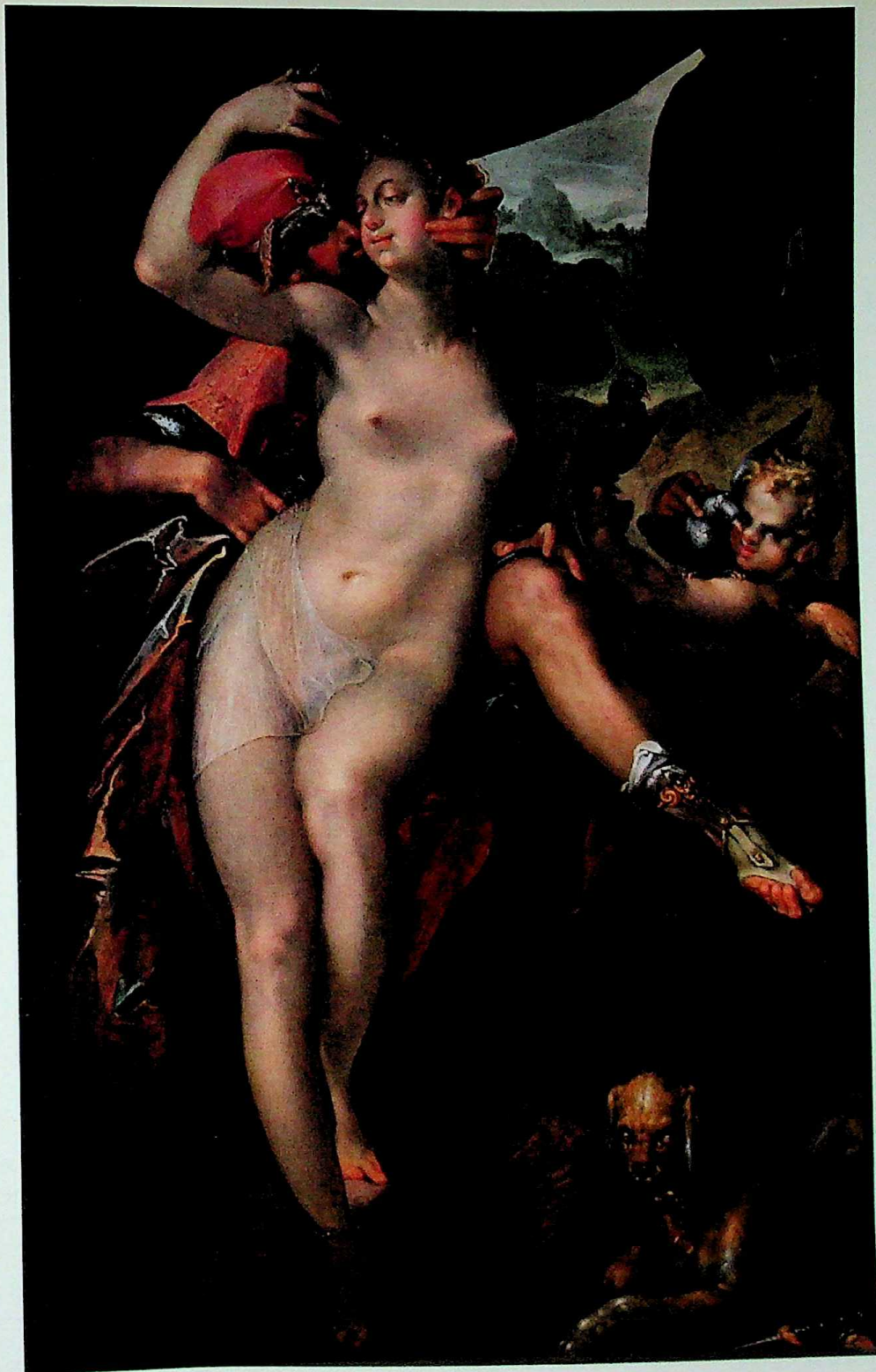
Apart from the sculptor Adriaen de Vries, the most important contributor to the Prague style was the painter Bartholomäus Spranger. Born in Antwerp, the son of a merchant, he began learning to paint at the early age of eleven. He was in Paris as a nineteen-year-old, at the same time as Primaticcio and Niccolò dell'Abbate. Then, by way of Lyons, Milan and Parma, where he experienced the influence of Correggio and Parmegianino, he arrived in 1566 at Rome, and remained there for eight years. Through the good offices of his friend Giovanni da Bologna, who also taught Adriaen de Vries, he gained entry in 1575 to Maximilian II's court at Vienna. Finally, he settled down at Prague in 1581 as Court Painter to Rudolph II, who gave him a gold chain, a coat of arms, and a title. To begin with, Spranger had his studio in the palace on the Hradčany and worked exclusively for the Emperor. His pictures were thus directly accessible to only a very few, but they became widely known through the engravings of Sadeler and Goltzius. Spranger was regarded as one of the most distinguished artists of the time, so that the journey he made to the Netherlands during 1602 in the service of his master developed into a real triumphal progress. The self-portrait at the Vienna Gallery (Inv. No. 1137) reveals a very earnest, almost brooding, but also excitable and probably impetuous character.

As might be expected, Spranger's paintings, and Rudolphine art generally, can nowhere be seen in such abundance or in examples of such high quality as at Vienna. Almost all the Gallery's works by Spranger belonged to the Imperial collection at Prague. Today, in the new arrangement, his five scenes of ill-fated lovers drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Inv. Nos. 1095, 1097, 2613, 2614, 2615) are specially notable among the early works both for their intrinsic merit and because they form a series conceived as an organic whole. The two small paintings entitled "Hercules and Omphale" (Inv. No. 1126) and "Vulcan and Maia" (Inv. No. 1128) are excellent, unusual examples of those cabinet pictures then so much in demand, as is also the "Allegory of Rudolph II" of 1592 (Inv. No. 1125), and all three are on copper. Finally, the "Venus and Adonis" here reproduced is a particularly choice work from Spranger's late, mature period—indeed, it is a masterpiece of Rudolphine Mannerism in general.

Looking at this picture, one understands what Lomazzo means in his *Trattato dell'Arte e della Pittura* (Milan, 1584), when, to explain the idea of a *figura serpentina*, he compares such a figure's movement with the flickering flame of a candle. Set in the chatoyant red robe held back gently by Adonis, close up against the god's tunic of a red that grows increasingly fiery as it approaches the most intense red of all in the cap, Venus's naked body sends forth the cool, mother-of-pearl gleam of its flesh-tints, in which the softest rose is accompanied by transparent olive and bluish shadows. As a background, the fresh green and grey of the mountain landscape are a wonderful chromatic invention.

A curious rôle is played in the picture by the cupid looking back over Adonis's knee and by the dog guarding his master's spear. Both are in very close rapport with the spectator—particularly the dog, whose mournful gaze detains the eye. The creature brings an odd kind of reality into the composition, a limit to its "divine" content.

Spranger's picture was only "discovered" among the many not displayed in the Gallery, and put on exhibition there, in 1915, when court Mannerism was beginning to be appreciated. The painter certainly executed it for Rudolph II.



HANS VON AACHEN

Born 1552 at Cologne, died 1615 at Prague

JOKING COUPLE

Copper, 25 × 20 cm. (9⁷/₈ × 7⁷/₈ in.) Inv. No. 1155

The second in the triumvirate of Rudolph II's Court Painters at Prague is Hans von Aachen, so called because his father's family lived in that city. Like Spranger, he began learning his craft at the age of eleven from a Flemish painter. Then, as was the custom, he went to Italy for his real artistic education in accordance with the spirit of the times, which then meant the Mannerist spirit. He spent fourteen years in the peninsula, at Venice, Florence, and Rome, and already there gained recognition and achieved success, especially as a portrait-painter. In 1588, he returned for a few months to Cologne, and then moved to Munich, where he spent several years working chiefly for the Bavarian ducal court as a portraitist and painter of pictures to go in churches. Prompted, it is said, by a likeness of Giovanni da Bologna that Hans executed at Florence, Rudolph II must have made efforts to acquire him for Prague even before this time. In 1592, he was appointed *Kammermaler* to the Emperor, who two years later raised him to the nobility, like Spranger. Thanks to Rudolph, the social status of the artist north of the Alps underwent a fundamental change. Hans married the daughter of Orlando di Lasso, the famous composer and Bavarian Court Musician, in 1596, and only then did he actually move to Prague.

It seems that Rudolph engaged Hans von Aachen principally on account of his established reputation as a portraitist, and it is, in fact, to him that the Vienna Gallery owes the best likeness of the Emperor (Inv. No. 6438). Rudolph's strange personality comes through more clearly in this painting than in the perhaps more splendid, but essentially "official" bronze bust by Adriaen de Vries. However, Hans did not only work at Prague as a portraitist. In 1603, he went to Italy on a lengthy journey that took him to Venice, Turin, Mantua, and Modena, in order to portray a series of beautiful princesses, from among whom Rudolph intended—or so he told his brothers—to chose a wife. Similar missions were also undertaken in 1605 and 1608 by the artist, who obviously enjoyed his master's special confidence, and at the same time he had the job of looking out for and acquiring works of art for the Imperial collection. He seems to have played a decisive part in the negotiations that led to the buying of Dürer's "Madonna of the Rose Garlands" at Venice (1601-02); and it was due to him that the Elector Christian II of Saxony presented Rudolph with Dürer's "Adoration of the Kings" from the Schlosskirche at Wittenberg, a picture that went to Florence at the end of the eighteenth century in the course of an exchange. In 1597, Hans was sent to Besançon to negotiate the purchase of works by Dürer, Titian, and Raphael from the estate of Cardinal Granvella. Advising his employer to receive the artist at Modena with the highest honours, as one of the Emperor's most influential servants, the Este ambassador Manzuolo described him thus: "He is a man more simple than clever; he does nothing, says nothing, and neither gives nor takes the smallest trifle without immediately notifying his master of everything down to the last farthing. He is a Catholic, speaks a little Italian, and is a truthful man, who loves wine and gaiety."

One gets much the same impression from Hans's pictures. The Vienna Gallery has several mythologies by him, such as the big "Bacchus, Ceres, and Cupid" (Inv. No. 1110), which are marked by a certain solidity of form and colour, especially in comparison with Spranger's slightly over-refined style. Despite Flemish influences reaching him particularly through Spranger, and despite his long stay in Italy, Hans von Aachen produced what is unmistakably the German variety of Rudolphine Mannerism. Typical of it are, besides his portraits proper, small genre scenes based very firmly on reality, with two or three half-length figures that look like portraits.

The Vienna Gallery's little picture of this kind, which can be reproduced here full size, reveals a heart-warming, fresh, uncommonly wholesome art, fit to throw a purifying light on the much-maligned Emperor who commissioned it. What amuses the man so much is not that the girl can see herself in the glass, but that she can see the spectator and the spectator her—and this explains his pointing finger. It was an ingenious notion to make the mirror-image look so fresh by framing it in black, and to repeat the frame motif orthogonally in the door.

The "Joking Couple", which comes from Rudolph II's "art-room", is already mentioned in a Prague inventory of 1621: "J. von Ach, a woman looking in the mirror". In 1765, it turned up at Pressburg Castle, which was then being furnished for a newly-wedded couple: Archduchess Maria Christina, one of Maria Theresa's daughters, and Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, who founded the Albertina collection of prints and drawings, so called after him. The picture entered the Vienna Gallery when it was established in the Belvedere.



PLATE 39

JOSEPH HEINTZ

*Born 1564 at Basle, died 1609 at Prague**ADONIS TAKING LEAVE OF VENUS*Copper, 40 × 31 cm. (15³/₄ × 12¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 1105

Joseph Heintz was called to Prague by Rudolph II in 1591, and he, too, was appointed *Kammermaler*. He had already met Hans von Aachen, his senior by twelve years, at Rome in 1584, and received painting instruction from him then. Heintz's stay in Rome is documented for the period 1583-87. When the Emperor's summons reached him, he was at Augsburg.

His constitutes the third variety—the Swiss one, if you like—of the Prague court style, and a particularly characteristic example of it is, perhaps, the big “Reclining Venus” (Inv. No. 1104; a companion-piece showing the same figure from the back was carried off to Paris by the French in 1809, and is now at Dijon). Its strength lies in a rare feeling for the palpable surface of what is represented, whether it be the velvet-soft skin and metal-hard jewellery or the subtly differentiated fabrics. In this connection, mention must also be made of Heintz's portraiture, represented at Vienna by an attractive miniature of his master (Inv. No. 1124). Yet before one of his outstanding works, the small, many-figured “Diana and Actaeon” (Inv. No. 1115), we forget all about fidelity to the model. Here, the artist has preserved his individuality, especially as regards the colour, even against the very powerful influence of Spranger. Van Mander says that Spranger himself actually admitted in later years to having learnt much from the young Heintz's colour, and also from that of Hans von Aachen.

The work chosen for reproduction here, the small “Adonis Taking Leave of Venus”, is a true cabinet picture, and in it, we find an intimate union between the painterliness characteristic of Heintz and a Mannerist figure style obviously indebted to Spranger. At the period when the picture was executed, its subject ranked among the most popular, and was tackled again and again. An artist could represent the final, sorrowful, irremediable separation described by Ovid, as did, for example, Abraham Janssens, the last of the Antwerp Mannerists; or he could depict that other, eternally repeated leave-taking, which in the ancient myth symbolizes the constant renewal of nature in the cycle of the seasons. Because Venus-Aphrodite was inconsolable for the death of Adonis, Zeus conceded that her lover should spend half the year by her side on earth, instead of remaining for ever in the underworld with Persephone.

It is in this light that Heintz's scene is to be understood. For the couple have here been disturbed by Zeus's eagle, which has come, on the right, with the god's thunderbolts to remind Adonis that it is once more time for him to depart and fulfil his appointed destiny. The lovers are still together; but Venus, half lying and half sitting, in that transient attitude so dear to the Mannerists, is about to rise from the couch, supported by the hand of Adonis. He, already prepared to leave, manifests his response to Zeus's reminder in the turn of his back and head, and in the direction of his glance. It is the conflicting play of embrace and separation that gives the group, which ingeniously expresses the very essence of the myth, its great charm. But the artist was not only concerned with the problem of conveying an idea with the figures; he was also attracted by the actual task of relating the two bodies, surrounded by the cloud of their garments, as three-dimensional objects in space: the broad figure, seen from behind, of Adonis, and the slender, capricious form, turned very slightly towards the spectator, of Venus, whose ancestors can be traced, via Giovanni da Bologna and Cellini, to the art of Raphael. Above all, Heintz enjoyed setting the golden hue of the sun-tanned youth and the blond, creamy flesh-tints of the goddess against the dark greens of the boscaje and landscape beyond. In the bottom half of the picture appear, as a graceful paraphrase of the main group, two winged *amorini* trying to fasten the collar of a dog already impatient to be off: the one below Venus is shown with its chest turned slightly away from the beholder, the one below Adonis is seen from the front.

Although the earliest record of it is in the Belvedere catalogue of 1783, this picture, too, undoubtedly belonged to Rudolph II.

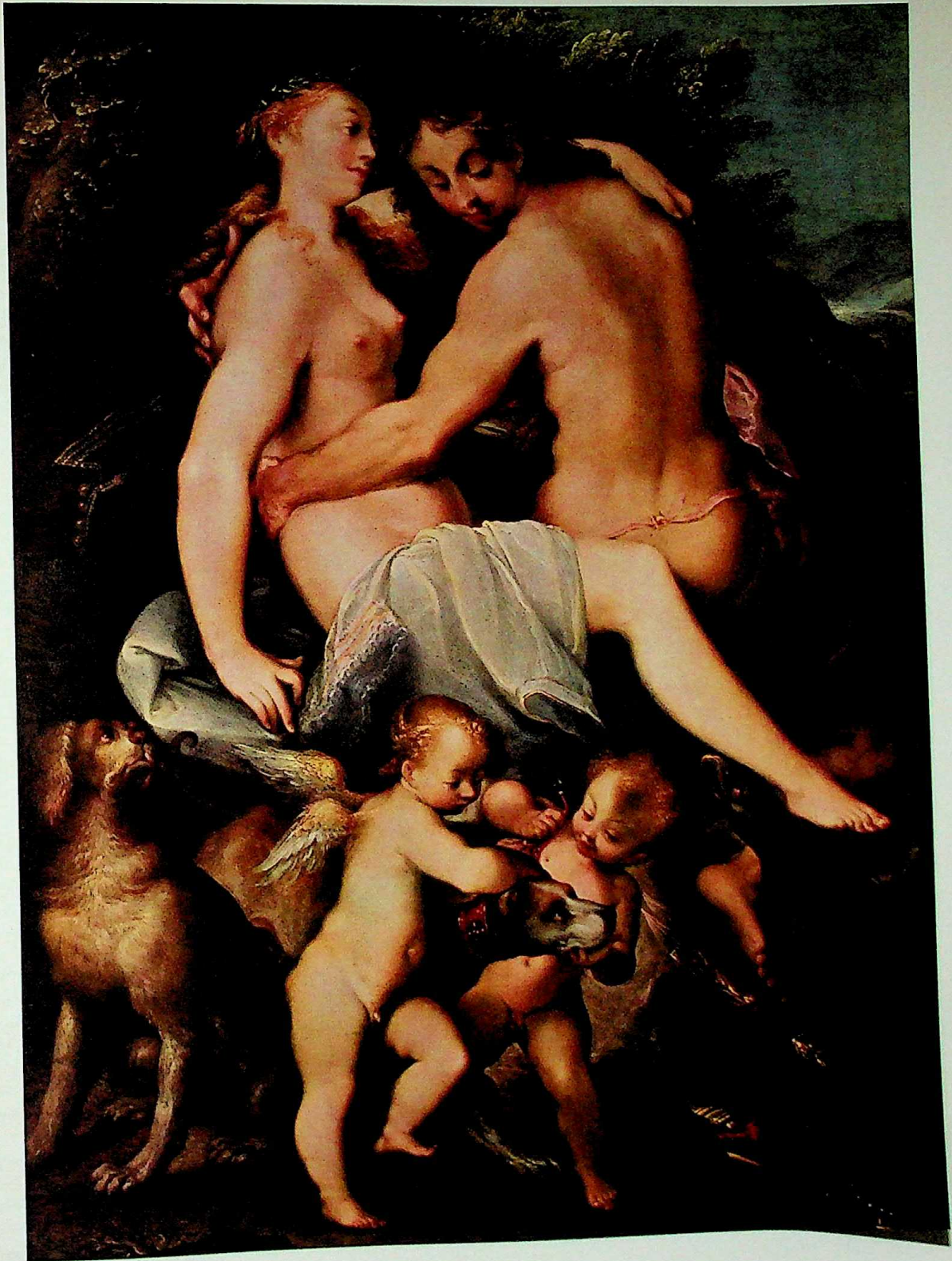


PLATE 40

FRANS HALS

Born about 1580-81 at Antwerp or Malines, died 1666 at Haarlem

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

Canvas, 108 × 80 cm. (42½ × 31½ in.) Inv. No. 9091

Unlike almost every other painter, Frans Hals was exclusively a portraitist. Even his so-called genre pictures of lute-players, drinkers, singers, and so on, are all portraits, just as are his groups of officers. Moreover, with the sole exception of the unfinished Amsterdam group portrait, every one of his paintings came into being at Haarlem, where he had lived since early childhood. From 1611, we can follow Hals's production for fifty-five years, right up to his death. The adversities suffered by the artist, who ended his days in the old people's home at Haarlem that is now a museum containing his most important works, did nothing whatever to check or disturb his spiritual growth and the progress of his creative development. From the early "Banquet of the Officers of the Company of St George" (1616) to the late "Governors of the Old Men's Almshouse" (1664), the big groups follow one another like milestones. Between them come the many individual portraits of the most varied sorts of people, from Malle Babbe, the notorious "Witch of Haarlem", to Descartes.

Thanks to the generosity of the Rothschild family, the Vienna Gallery now boasts four works by Hals, and they throw light on several phases of his evolution. The first (Inv. No. 9009), a life-size male half-length dated 1634 and including the arms of the Roosterman family, was presented by Baroness Clarisse de Rothschild. In it, one finds bold brushwork and a use of black and white that are both of unprecedented virtuosity; but also a considerable interest in exhaustively describing the costume of the subject, who is fully convinced of his own importance and good appearance. The second (Inv. No. 709), which belongs to the Gallery's ancient patrimony and shows a young man wearing a hat, still retains a certain conventionality and self-consciousness of pose, but the pictorial atmosphere has become much calmer. Though the clothing has lost its splendour, it has gained a monumental quality, and the facial characterization is now far richer, suggesting great inward unrest and tension. However, on approaching the work here reproduced, which was presented to the Gallery by Baron Louis de Rothschild in 1947, one immediately becomes aware of the gulf that separates it from both the earlier ones. Instead of a public image of someone deliberately posing, one finds here the man himself, behaving quite normally. Nothing is known about him.

The first things that one notices in the picture are the bold outline and the brightly lit face above a snow-white collar. Almost as arresting is the hand—indeed, face and hand now suffice to characterize the figure. All the facial features—the eye-brows, the nose, the lines round the mouth—are very strong, energetic, and firm. The mouth below the narrow black moustache is lively, and the eyes are even more so. Despite the precise definition of all its details, the face seems to be in constant movement, and the striking, complex expression reveals a commanding personality. It could suggest a doctor or somebody with a similar occupation: a man granted an exceptional insight into human nature. The subject appears to confront the painter (and the spectator) with a certain air of intellectual superiority, but also with human sympathy. Conversely, one feels sure that the artist had before him on this occasion a model in whom he was able to discover much more than in so many others who posed for him down the long years.

The hand emerging from the black cloak is the second passage that engages one's attention. Not just in the painting technique but also in the self-forgetful modesty and genuineness of the content, this flickeringly nervous hand comes very close to the master's last creations, although the portrait can hardly have been painted after 1654. The fingers clutch something crumpled that was once a glove and an almost essential property when posing. Like this glove, the clothing too has lost its old importance. It is little more than a big, black shape proving a socle for the head and a foil to the hand, though it does stabilize and orientate the figure. Except for a few strong, straight folds running from the shoulder and the hidden elbow to the hand, it is quite featureless. These folds are, of course, most important and effective, since they provide a unifying link between hand and face.

The fourth Hals portrait, which was also given by Baron Louis de Rothschild in 1947, is of a woman (Inv. No. 9092). It is more or less contemporary with the one just discussed, and at least its equal in every respect. One can see how the artist at this late period could achieve a different kind of colour effect with the same means, when the subject required it. Even though the dress is black, warmer more lively flesh-tints, a play of bluish, greenish, and grey shadows over a lot of white, a gold ribbon in the hair, and a similar accent in the costume all combine to produce a general effect that is positively gay.

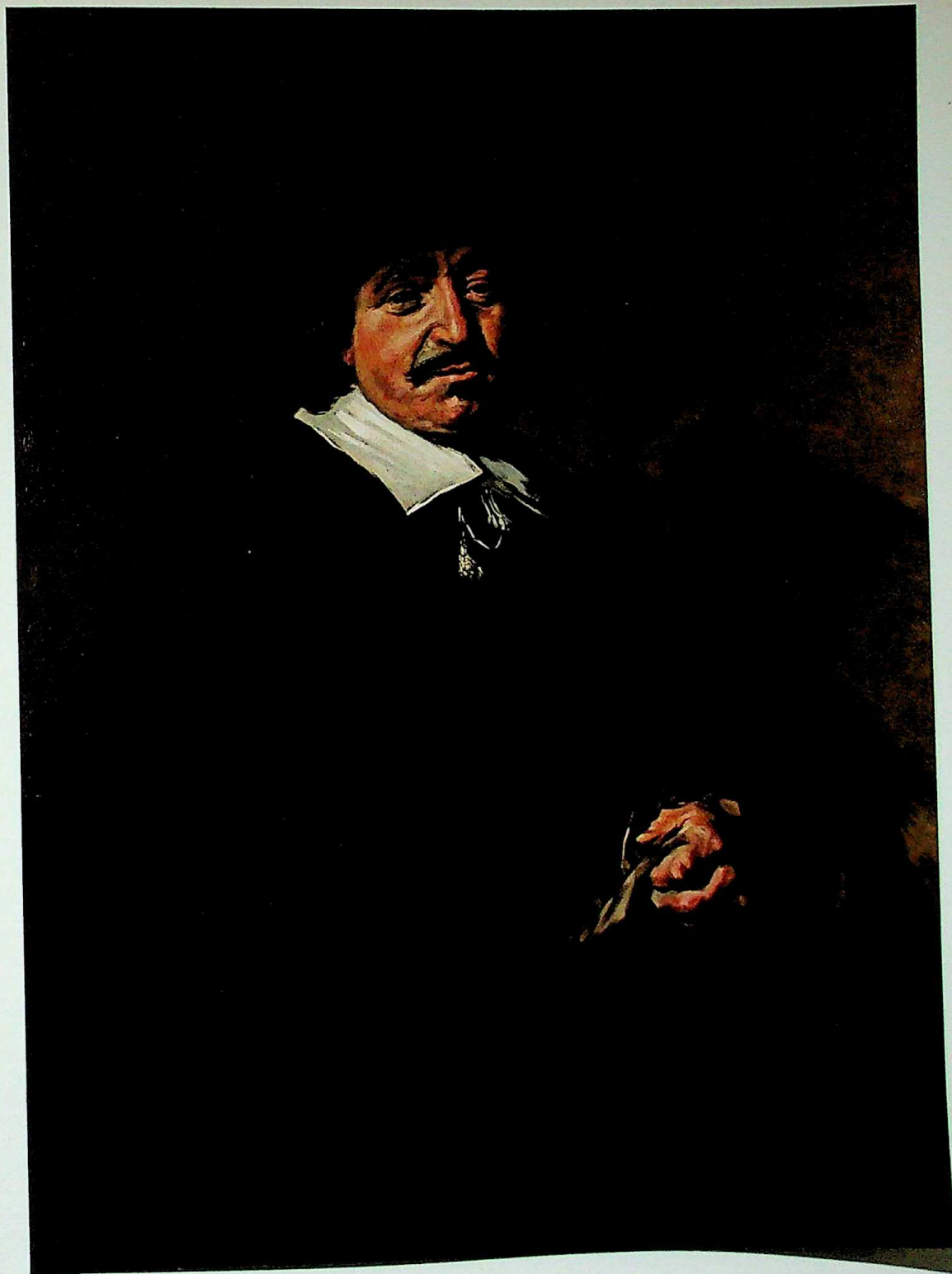


PLATE 41

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN

Born 1606 at Leyden, died 1669 at Amsterdam

THE APOSTLE PAUL

Canvas, 135 × 111 cm. ($53\frac{1}{8}$ × $43\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Signed and dated 163(5). Inv. No. 397

The nine Rembrandts in the Vienna Gallery are almost evenly divided between two fairly limited periods of the artist. Four were painted during his first years at Amsterdam and four considerably later, between 1652 and 1658, while the remaining one belongs to the last years of his life.

The two portraits of a married couple (Inv. Nos. 407, 409) were executed in 1632, the year after Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam, and are thus contemporary with "The Anatomy Lesson of Professor Nicolaus Tulp". In their pictorial beauty and the detailed rendering of the luxurious garments, they bear eloquent witness to the artist's swift and splendid rise as a portraitist of Amsterdam society; but in the unmistakable attitude of mind and psychological insight that they reveal, they were also secure guarantees that their creator would not become a slave to the middle-class requirements of those years.

In 1635, while at work on "The Blinding of Samson", or else in 1636, the year when "Danae" was completed, the then scarcely 30-year-old Rembrandt painted his "Apostle Paul". The date is not certain: whereas earlier authorities did not hesitate to interpret the inscribed figures as 1636, today, after the cleaning of the picture, 1635 is preferred.

One is reminded of several variations on the same theme or of related images of the prophet Jeremiah and other recluses deep in meditation, from the Leyden period. Since 1627, this type of subject had engrossed the artist for several years, on account of its great psychological interest. At Leyden, it had always been a question of a small picture in which the figure appeared full length and the setting played a very important part as an expansion of the theme. On the other hand, this return to the subject in the Vienna Gallery's painting came at a moment when Rembrandt was displaying his full powers as a Baroque artist. Accordingly, the format is big and the figure actually more than life size. Indeed, the way this image fills most of the picture surface, which even cuts it at the lower edge, makes its largeness positively imposing. (The picture was considerably reduced in size when, evidently during the eighteenth century, the canvas was folded at the sides and along the top. This had the result of making the figure even more narrowly confined. In 1941-58, the work was restored to its original state, which gives the image the space it needs for freedom of movement.) At the same time, there bursts forth from very deep within the personality of this St Paul a fervour that determines the entire form and colouring of the picture. The urge to express it also explains Rembrandt's choice of a large format, which is characteristic of his development around the middle of the sixteen-thirties. Paul's head and the upper part of his body turn energetically towards the beholder, while his left hand hangs loosely over the edge of the book. The furrowed brow, on which the brightest light is concentrated, the flowing beard, and the black eyes with their far-away look all descend, as has been proved, from Michelangelo's prophets in the Sistine Chapel. Into the unruly flow of movement have been drawn the tassels of Paul's girdle, the thick fringe of the table-cloth, and the curling pages of the open tome. A wall of books, heaped up before the saint, extends round in a broad semicircle from the rear, where a huge sword, the martyr's attribute, gleams out of the blue-grey depths. In this truly Baroque picture, nothing is just form, as even the smallest detail has been moulded by the content. Perhaps the two hands are the most significant indications here of Rembrandt's passionate and incorruptible devotion to truth.

The earliest reference to "The Apostle Paul" appears in the Prague inventory of 1718. It is known to have been at Vienna not later than 1781, when the Gallery was established in the Upper Belvedere.

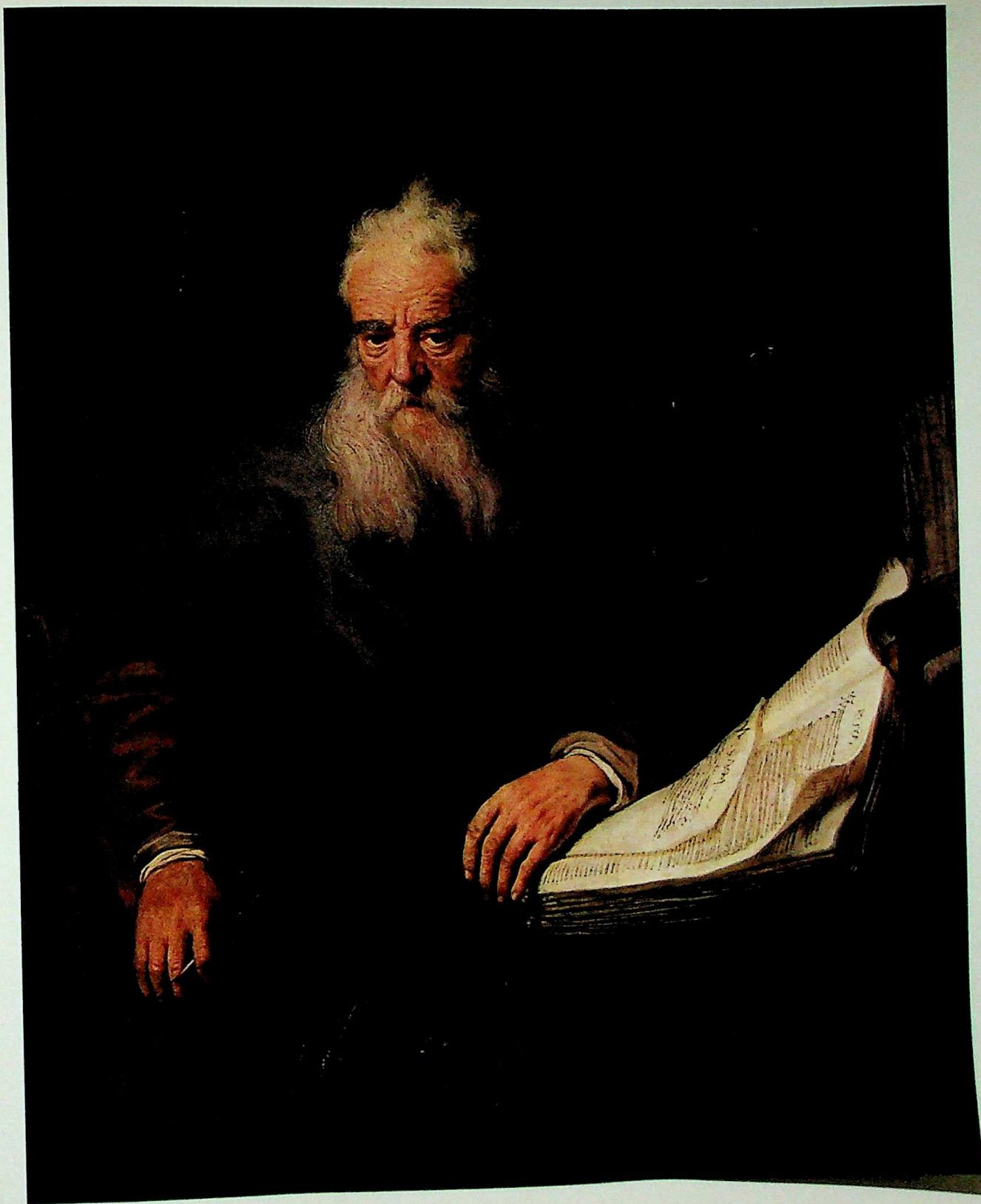


PLATE 42

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN

Born 1606 at Leyden, died 1669 at Amsterdam

THE ARTIST'S MOTHER

Oak, 80 × 61.5 cm. (31½ × 24¼ in.) Signed and dated 1639. Inv. No. 408

From 1627 until the time of his move to Antwerp in 1631, Rembrandt drew and painted many portraits of his mother Neeltje, almost all of them very small. Sometimes the sitter is transformed by her costume into a biblical figure, as in "The Prophetess Hannah"; or else an attitude like that of prayer or reading the Bible raises her above the sphere of ordinary, secular existence. Usually, however, it is the intention of studying Neeltje's face or of producing a true image of her that predominates. From the very start, Rembrandt made such likenesses without any sentimentality, but for all his sober scrutinizing, his work was founded on a pure, natural affection and relationship. Owing to the at first occasional, then permanent separation, these portraits from life understandably grew rarer after 1631, and the series came to a temporary end with the small etched head of 1633. On June 5 of that year, Rembrandt got engaged at Amsterdam to Saskia, the daughter of the Burgomaster of Leeuwarden, Hendrik van Uylenborch, and understandably his fiancée now took precedence as a model over his distant mother. Already then the latter was well advanced in years, as is shown by the last small portraits, though it is true that these stress rather than minimize her age.

Rembrandt portrayed his mother once again, the year before she died. There are some grounds for supposing that he painted the picture, dated 1639, when Neeltje came from Leyden to visit him at his new house, which he had just bought in the Breestraat at Amsterdam. For the 33-year-old artist, this was the period of social ascent, success, and prosperity, but also one of great artistic development. To the directly preceding years belong such portraits as the two "Preachers" of 1637 and Bible scenes like "Samson's Wedding Feast" that prelude the magnificent unfolding of the forties ("The Night Watch", 1642). This final likeness of the artist's mother takes its place among such works.

Now Rembrandt confronted his model with a different artistic aim, as someone of mature experience. No longer a tiro making studies to further his own progress, his sole purpose here was to exalt for its own sake the familiar, now ancient figure to a work of art.

In the Vienna picture, the old woman appears to be expensively clad. She is wearing a fur-trimmed mantle with a gold clasp over a black dress, and her tightly gathered shift ends at the neck in frilling. The white wimple about her head almost completely hides the brow and passes under the chin. It is covered by a heavy brown shawl, which has a brocade lining and ends in fringes over the shoulders. Yet on close inspection, it becomes clear that one's impression of luxury is mainly due to the painterly magic, and that there is no intention of "dressing up" the figure. Moreover, the self-same magic gives this countenance an eternal and universal quality. However, it is not only the concentration of light and the mysterious chiaroscuro, here perfected, that transfigure the black eyes gazing into the distance from between reddened lids, the narrow, troubled mouth opening almost imperceptibly, and the countless wrinkles and folds covering the entire face. Above all, this effect is the outcome of a very thorough coming-to-grips with the physical facts, which have been made to disclose the spiritual truths behind them. At the same time, the idea of the aged mother was, of course, linked up in Rembrandt's mind with that of biblical, prophetic grandeur, and this association imposes itself on the spectator, too.

If the upper half of the picture still contains recollections of the preceding Baroque years, the lower half's central feature of the hands supported on a stick before the dark mantle reveals a pronounced severity; and before its reduction to an oval in the eighteenth century, the composition was undoubtedly still more so.

It is not known where the panel came from. The earliest reference to it is in the 1783 catalogue of the Belvedere gallery.



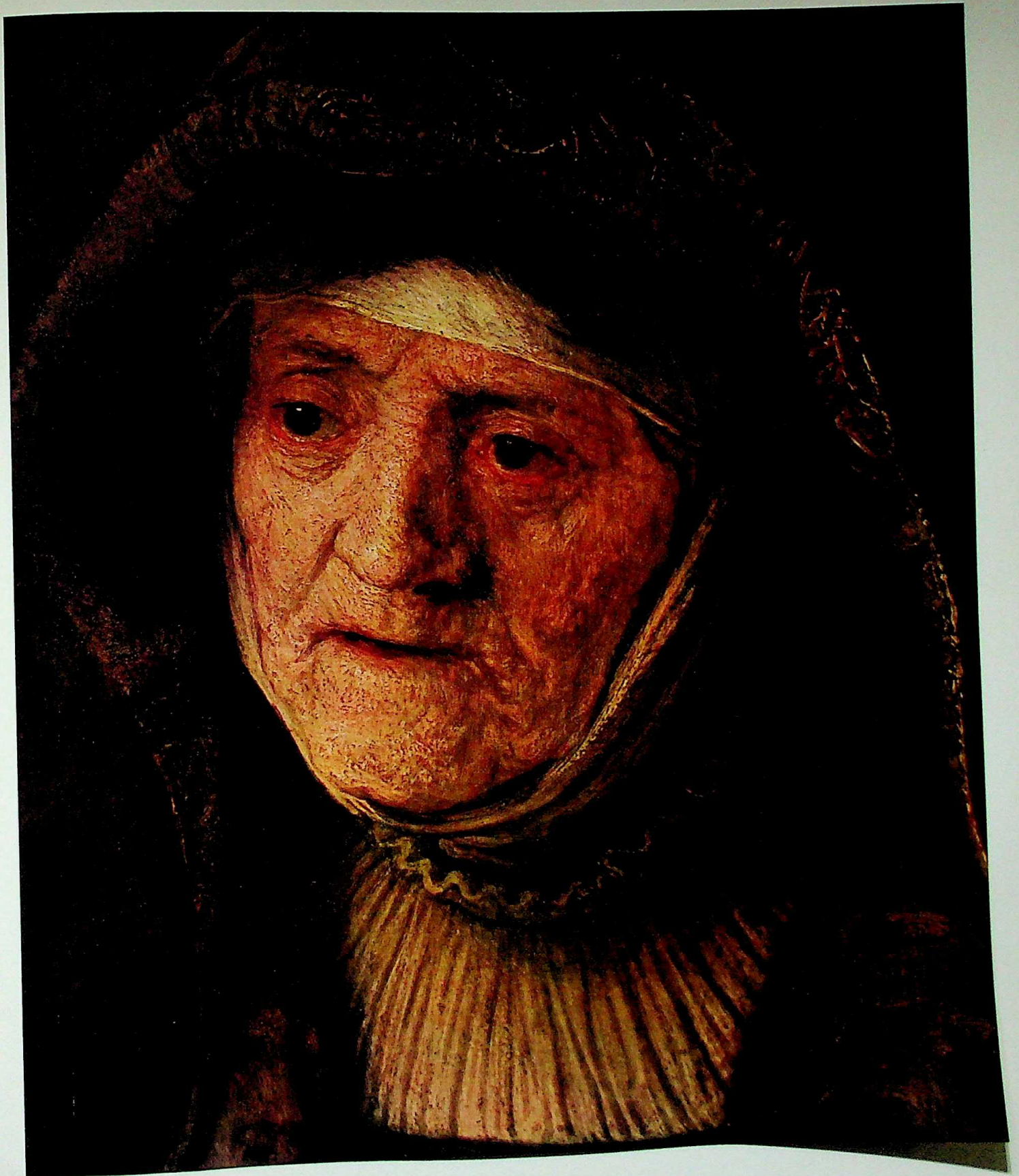


PLATE 43

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN

Born 1606 at Leyden, died 1669 at Amsterdam

TITUS

Canvas, 70.7 × 64 cm. (27⁷/₈ × 25¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 410

A curly-headed lad wearing a black cap is sitting back in an armchair. The light falls from somewhere at the side behind him, toying with his golden locks, which cast shadows and half-shadows across his scantily lit features. It strikes the hands holding the book and the lace at the cuff resting on the chair-arm more directly and decisively. As the picture has been somewhat cut on the right, the fingers of the left hand are now only partly visible. The boy poses his deeply shaded eyes intently on the book, and parts his lips as if in song or speech, or perhaps just in a calm, silent mouthing of the printed words. It is more a spiritual radiance than reflected physical light that the book diffuses.

A number of other likenesses with similar facial features, all executed between 1650 and 1660, leave no room for doubt that in the present work Rembrandt has portrayed his son Titus. Born to the artist's first wife Saskia in 1641, he was the last of her four children and the only one that survived. When, therefore, Saskia followed the other three to the grave in 1642, Rembrandt had no one but Titus left to remind him of his happiest years.

The Vienna portrait must have been painted round about 1656, when Titus was approximately fourteen. Rembrandt's prosperity had then long been in decline: financial ruin and the dispersion of his collections were inevitable. During these years, the painter united with those nearest and dearest to him—with Hendrickje Stoffels and Titus—in an intimate little community. From it, there issued during the gloomiest days of the bankruptcy his most beautiful portraits of these two companions, along with various large masterpieces such as "Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph".

Even if one was unaware of the exact relationship between the artist and his model, one would no doubt guess its closeness. Not only do the brushwork, the colour, the chiaroscuro, and the half-shade reveal a mastery that transforms every little detail, like the book or the edge of the sleeve, into a thing of peerless beauty, but the light positively caresses this face on which a father's eye is anxiously fixed. Titus died in 1668, a year before Rembrandt.

The portrait was already displayed in the Stallburg, and appears in Storffer's painted "inventory" of the collection there. Since then, it has always remained at the Gallery.

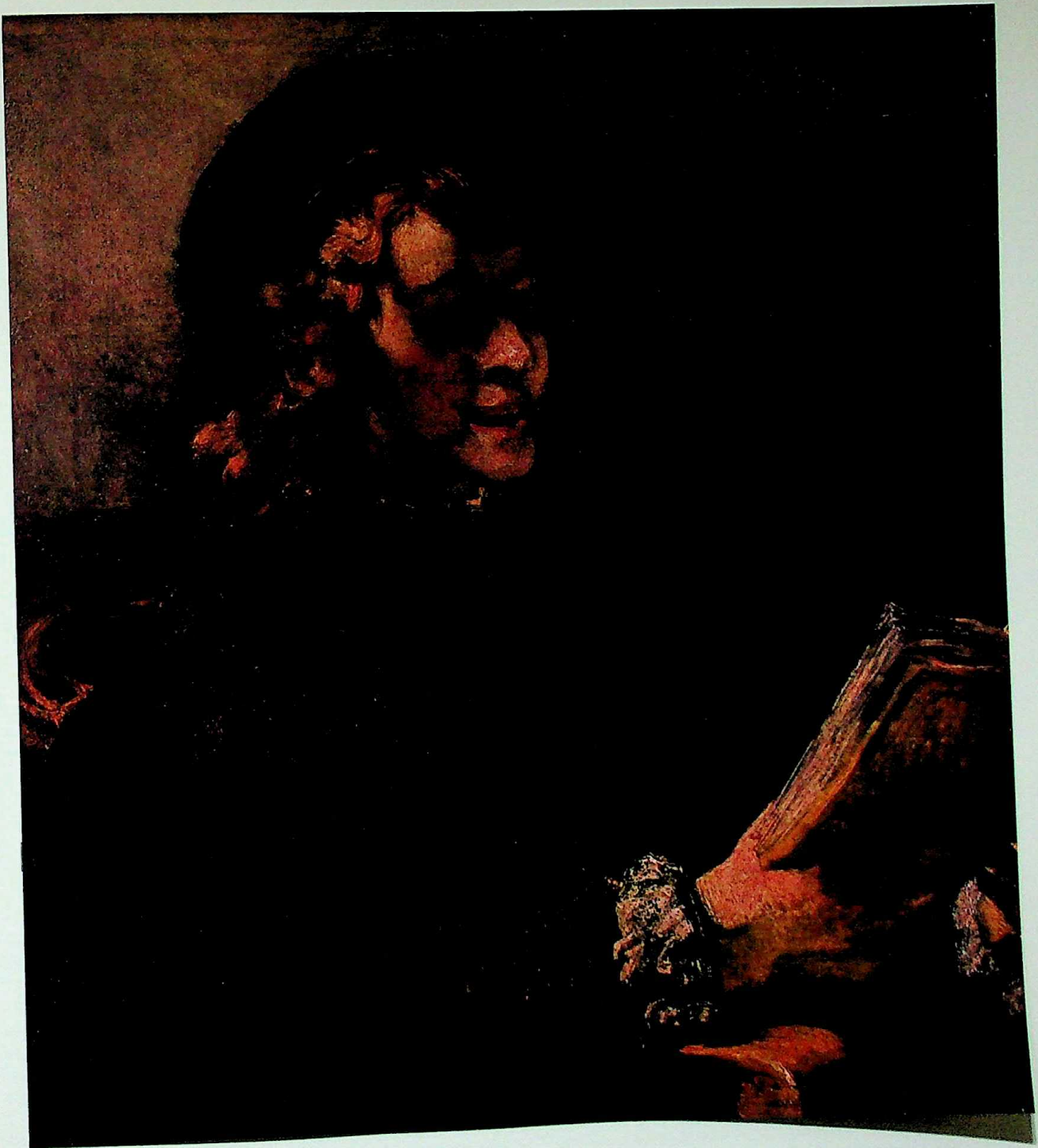


PLATE 44

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN

Born 1606 at Leyden, died 1669 at Amsterdam

THE SMALL SELF-PORTRAIT

Oak, 48.5 × 40.5 cm. (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 16 in.) Signed. Inv. No. 414

During the forty odd years of his creative activity, Rembrandt drew, etched, or painted well over a hundred self-portraits. Chronologically arranged, they provide a biography in which external events, environment, artistic development, and spiritual growth are all referred to directly. Apart from Van Gogh, there is no other artist in whose life the self-portrait played an even approximately similar rôle.

The three examples at the Vienna Gallery follow one another rapidly from 1652 to, at the latest, 1658. In the biography as a whole, they constitute only a brief chapter, but it is a particularly exciting, eventful one. For besides being that of Rembrandt's financial failure (his troubles began as early as 1652, and led to the declaration of bankruptcy and then the compulsory sale by auction of house, household effects, and art-collection in 1657 and 1658), this period was perhaps his most fruitful one as an artist.

The Vienna series begins with the so-called "Large Self-portrait" of 1652 (Inv. No. 411). Rembrandt presents himself about half-length in a defiant, near-frontal pose, with elbows well out and thumbs hooked in girdle. More brightly lit and strongly cut by the edge of the picture than the left, the right arm and shoulder are thrust forward somewhat. The head is free and erect under the barret, while the whole face vibrates in steady concentration as the eyes firmly and self-confidently take stock of the beholder. With its vast store of vital energy and spiritual force, the picture has rightly been seen again and again as expressing imperturbable assurance, steady resistance, and undaunted spirit.

The second self-portrait is dated 1655 (Inv. No. 9040). It shows Rembrandt turned slightly towards the right, and wearing a dark barret, a fur-coat, and a gold chain. The greater part of the face—especially the forehead, eyes, and much of the mouth—is wrapped in soft half-shadow. Owing to the turned-up collar and attitude of the head, the impression here is no longer one of complete self-confidence.

Of the three, the "Small Self-portrait" was certainly painted last. Everything is concentrated on the head, and the portion of the figure represented is more narrowly confined than in almost any other Rembrandt self-portrait, back to the earliest one at Cassel. The fleshy face, and above all the nose, has been modelled with remarkable vigour. It is a face quivering with inward unrest, and the sensual mouth, stressed by a light red, really seems to move. Looking out from beneath ragged, unequal brows and a much wrinkled forehead that is largely hidden by dark shadow, the close-set eyes are the blackest thing in the picture, and they still glow with an inner light. Yet a strange anxiety, the helpless bewilderment of one who asks but cannot understand the answer, is expressed by this penetrating gaze; and the opposition of the animated lower part of the face, with which the vivid red triangle of the doublet is closely linked, makes the disquiet even more strongly apparent. Its biographical content and the manner of its execution assign the work to the period 1656-58.

The "Small Self-portrait" is first mentioned in the 1783 catalogue of the Belvedere gallery, whereas the "Large Self-portrait" was definitely to be seen in the Stallburg. The picture dated 1655 was only acquired in 1942, from the Mendelsohn collection at Berlin, and the line of its owners can be traced back as far as the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was in London.



PLATE 45

GERRIT DOU

Born 1613 at Leyden, died there 1675

THE DOCTOR

Oak, 49.3 × 37 cm. (19³/₈ × 14⁵/₈ in.) round at the top. Signed and dated 1653 on the edge of the window-sill. Inv. No. 592

Gerrit Dou, the son of a glazier and glass-painter, left his father's trade to serve as an apprentice in Rembrandt's studio. He remained there from 1628 until his teacher moved to Amsterdam in 1631. Rembrandt himself had only recently finished his "novitiate" when he took on the pupil—indeed, they were all young then at this studio. The 22-year-old master was in the middle of the first phase of his artistic evolution, and full of the most varied ideas for compositions and themes. Pursuing his investigations and getting to the root of things with the *élan* and eagerness of a young genius, he applied himself to developing his new chiaroscuro technique, and recorded all his experiences and aims, preferably in small or very small pictures. Then there was Jan Lievens. Only a year younger than Rembrandt, he was at this period his companion in research, though according to a contemporary, Constantin Huyghens, his painting was superficially broader and bolder than that of his friend, and he liked to depict his subjects life size. Later, he would follow quite different paths under Flemish influence.

Finally came Dou, the first pupil, who in his themes, his technique, his preference for a small format, and his wealth of details, followed his teacher very closely. However, even the smallest work by Rembrandt is always monumental: every gesture aims to express something important, the heads of his parents grow into prophets' heads, while the prophets and apostles themselves fill out their dwellings with their thoughts and their own inward grandeur. Moreover, all delineation of detail, just as the directing of light and handling of colour, is wholly subservient to the pictorial idea. With Dou, on the other hand, the microcosm was from the outset something represented for its own sake, and the surfaces of things had, in their manifold tactile qualities, an intrinsic fascination. The hermits in their caves, the scholars in their studies, and the artists at their easels became a trifle ludicrous, and all of a sudden the genre scene with its endless opportunities for introducing still-life elements took almost complete control in Dou's own studio. It must be admitted, though, that the painter's fastidious technique provided such a refined, civilized account of this calm and unassuming lower-middle-class world that it virtually gave rise to a new sort of picture.

"The Doctor" is an excellent example from Dou's best period. The big round-arched window framing the scene reappears in a great many of the artist's works, as does the relief below the ledge, copied from an ivory by François Duquesnoy (perhaps Dou had a cast). Through this large opening enters a soft, cool, even light that confines itself to the foreground, beyond which the room is only very dimly lit by another round-arched window, this time leaded. The old woman using her apron to wipe away a tear and the young, self-important, rather dandified doctor examining the sample of urine with an affected gesture are the characters of a slightly mawkish tale that was retold again and again with variations, as it provided just the occasion for this favourite representation of a setting. At the same time, one must not overlook the way in which the doctor's arms echo the lines of the curtain and carpet, a device that gives the composition firmness even though it is made up of many small parts.

There are only a few chromatic accents of any strength: the blue curtain, the white pages of the book on anatomy, the brass bowl. Everywhere else the colouring is limited to extremely delicate nuances of grey, lilac, reddish-brown, and bluish-black, elegantly juxtaposed. It is far more in describing the feel of objects, in depicting their specific surface qualities, that the painter developed a rare ability to differentiate. The sharpness and clarity of the representation, which does equal honour to every particular, and the miniature-like delicacy of the execution, which was only possible with the aid of a lens, together give these works the miraculous, supernatural air that opened the doors of the earliest princely collections to them as soon as they were created.

Dou's picture first appeared in the Vienna Gallery when it was located in the Belvedere (catalogue 1783). Before that, it had presumably been in one of the private apartments of the palace, after coming from Archduke Leopold Wilhelm's gallery at Brussels. From 1809 to 1815, it was in Paris. Another Dou, which shows an old woman at a window watering flowers (Inv. No. 624), was acquired in 1811 from the collection of H. von Reith at Vienna. A third, known as "Girl with a Lantern" (Inv. No. 583)—one of the many such night pieces painted by Dou in the wake of Rembrandt and obviously also the Utrecht school—is known to have belonged to Leopold Wilhelm, and was already at Vienna in 1659.



PLATE 46

GERARD TER BORCH THE YOUNGER

Born 1617 at Zwolle, died 1681 at Deventer

WOMAN PEELING AN APPLE

Canvas mounted on panel, 36.3 × 30.7 cm. (14 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 12 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 588

Ter Borch's father, who in his youth spent nine years travelling through Germany, Italy, and France, was a mediocre painter, now forgotten. Yet to judge by all accounts of him, he obviously had a passion for art, and he acquainted his three sons and his daughter with its practice when they were still children. Above all, he was an excellent father, who had more to give his own than just bread, which, moreover, he earned during his later years chiefly as a tax-collector. His famous son also left home at an early age to lead a wandering life in his own country and abroad. At fifteen he was in Amsterdam, the year after in Haarlem, two years later in London, 1641-42 in Rome, then in Amsterdam again, at Münster in Germany from 1644 to 1648, and afterwards perhaps in Spain at the court of Philip IV. Aged thirty-three, he returned to his native Zwolle, and in 1654 finally settled at Deventer. It may seem surprising that, individually, so many stops and so many contacts with art and artists left hardly any visible trace on his painting. On the other hand, one cannot fail to see how this mode of life, his home and the extensive travels themselves, moulded the general character of such a poised, elegant, and truly urbane art.

Perhaps the works by Ter Borch that first come to mind are his pictures of soldiers, with their messengers, officers and trumpeters; or the scenes of fashionable society showing richly dressed ladies in conversation with foppish gentlemen. Perhaps one of his many refined groups of people making music, or one of the stylish late portraits of distinguished-looking men, will be picked out as being wholly characteristic. Together with a few other such domestic idylls, the "Woman Peeling an Apple" occupies a rather exceptional position among these pictures. It is one of Ter Borch's " stillest " works, and there is no difficulty in understanding why precisely it gained admission to the Imperial Gallery. If it has sometimes been said that Ter Borch was not a true genre painter, that he did not really care about depicting such scenes, and that the ever-recurring subjects and figures were just pretexts for placing the wearers of beautiful materials together in a certain charged relationship as a still-life artist does his objects, then this applies particularly to the Vienna picture. It is all "still-life": the apples on the table, the child looking up inquiringly, the woman pausing dreamily in her work, the basket in the foreground on the right, with the lovely gold-embroidered sewing-cushion and white cloth. Nothing is happening, but everything has been brought into relation with everything else, like the components of a good still-life.

As usual with Ter Borch, the space has a very subordinate rôle. The corner of the room is mainly a warm grey foil for the coloured elements of the composition in front, though it is true that, with its clear arrangement of orthogonals, this background also plays a major part in the consolidation of the picture structure as a whole. Thus, the group of verticals on the left—the brown door, the light and dark stripes of its frame and the corner—somehow balances the figure on the right, while the two horizontals of the map and those of the table correspond in such a way that the little girl's head forms a sort of pivot. This equilibrium also provides the two most important passages—the bowl of apples and the woman's head—with the most eye-catching positions in the picture. Between them, the child's face and the delicately curving line of her feathered hat again constitute a wonderful intermediary. Within this taut construction, the details of the composition can develop in all their richness, from the thin, delicate, timid forms of the candlestick and peel, to the broad, sweeping curves and fine linear intersections of the female figure. The charming antithesis between the still-life's gay concord of blue, white, and orange, and the woman's subdued harmony of yellow, white, and grey is reconciled by the shaded flesh-tints of, once more, the child.

Because of its maturity, the picture has been assigned to the period about 1650. If it is true that it was sent to the court at Vienna by Leopold Wilhelm as early as 1651, then this princely collector must have bought it, so to speak, off the easel. Like many other such small works, it may at first have served to decorate the Archduke's apartments, as it did not appear in the Gallery until this was moved to the Belvedere in 1781. In 1809, the painting was carried off to Paris, but returned to Vienna in 1815.

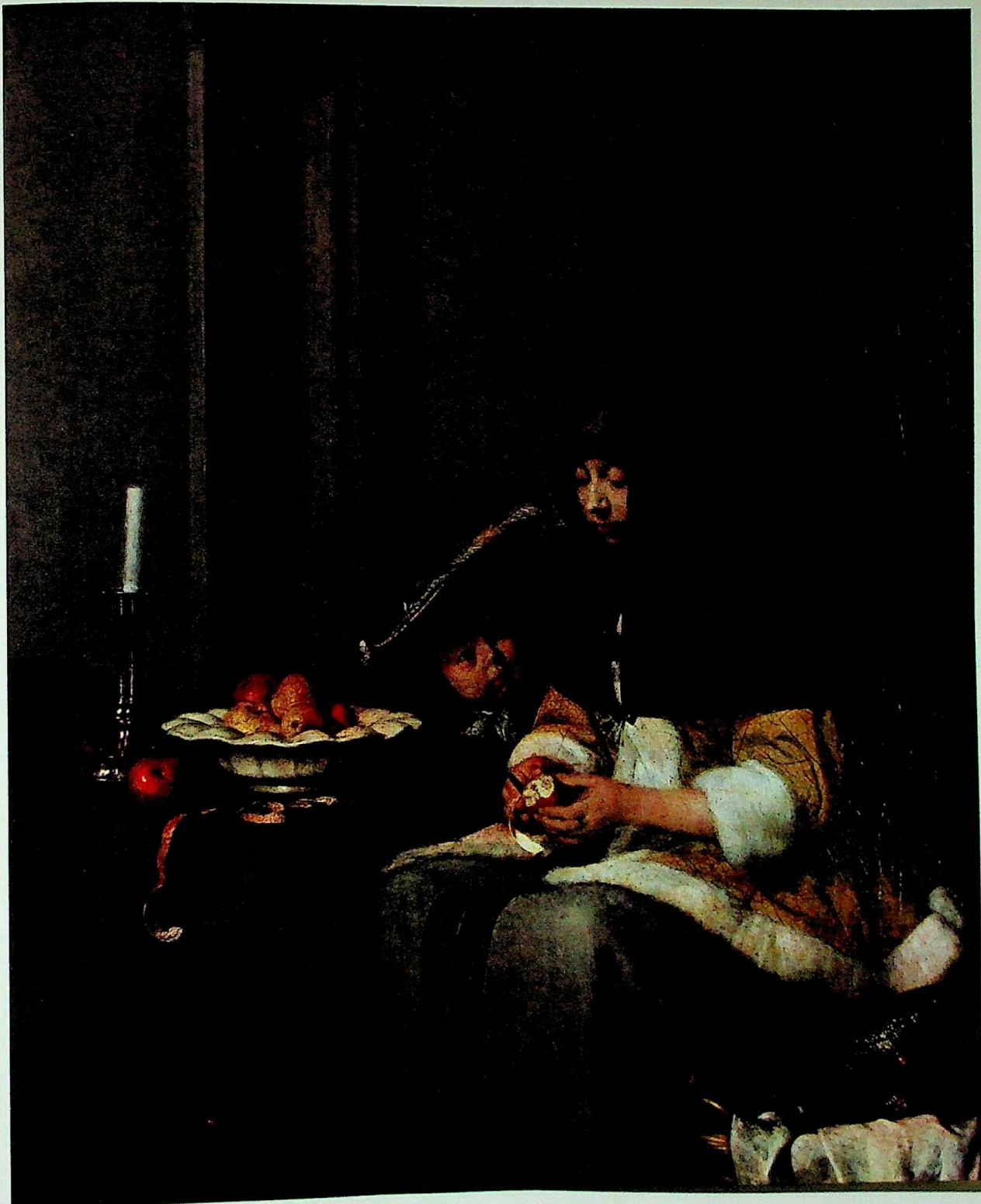


PLATE 47

JAN VERMEER VAN DELFT

Born 1632 at Delft, died there 1675

THE PAINTER IN HIS STUDIO

Canvas, 120 × 100 cm. (47¹/₄ × 39³/₈ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 9128

For some, this picture is "The Triumph of Painting", and the artist's model has been interpreted as Fame, Victory, or more recently, the Muse Clio; but in Vermeer's studio it was simply "The Art of Painting". The things that captivate any beholder from the very first glance are the bright, dazzling light bursting forth from behind the curtain, the air and space throughout the whole composition, and the clear, pure colour. One might be tempted to describe this as the simple beauty of a bright summer morning. Yet in its spatial structure, its lighting, and its colour orchestration, the picture is one of the most ingenious, calculated, and coherent in the history of art.

Vermeer has not tried to produce a complex spatial construction or a sequence of spaces leading into depth like, say, Pieter de Hooch. His achievement consists far more in having greatly heightened the impression of space in every little corner of a very simple construction (the general layout is strangely reminiscent of that in Velázquez's "The Tapestry Weavers", painted a few years earlier), and this is brought about by the most varied and refined of means. For example, the extreme closeness to the spectator of the objects in the foreground coupled with the rapid diminution inwards produces of itself a strong sense of depth, while the foreshortening of the black and white paving-stones is made all the more effective by the way chair and table deliberately block the line of vision and objects repeatedly break the pattern's flow, so that the eye only gradually probes its way towards the background.

Vermeer has likewise got the very most out of all his lighting. At its brightest on the left near the shadowy, strongly modelled curtain, the light declines considerably towards the right, so that the painter is seated at his easel in a strange semi-darkness; but it spreads calmly and evenly over the map, which forms a magnificent "conclusion", richly animated by its cracks and creases, on the rear wall. Between the darkness of the curtain and that of the artist, the main, "allegorical" figure is surrounded by and bathed in the most intense, most radiant light of all. Moreover, towards her thrusts a gleaming line of white paving-stones, which is ingeniously continued above by the landscapes along the edge of the map, beside the dazzling triangle of wall.

The last word, however, is had by the colour, which Vermeer has used purely as such, completely dematerializing it. With its big, vague paint-patches, the curtain is, so to speak, the amorphous plenitude of possibilities on which the artist has drawn in developing his chromatic conception. It is like an overture that contains all the elements of the "idea" and briefly states the theme. Thus, in the topmost thick fold amid much orange and reddish-brown, we find a pair of two-note chords: black-and-white and blue-and-yellow. Though seemingly so simple, these recur, varied and enriched with peerless refinement, throughout the picture, as in the artist's costume, the paving, or the cloak and book of the "Muse".

Not just two colour-harmonies, but two whole worlds confront each other here. The formally clad figure of the painter symbolizes the world of man, creative in his dark realm; but before him in the brightness stands resplendent "the eternal feminine"—in the highest, namely the artistic, sense of the expression. She it is around whom the entire composition has been constructed and for whom all the efforts of the artist in the picture are being made. Seen thus, the work becomes much more than a mere "allegory". It reveals itself to be Vermeer's "Homage to Art", conceived by the mature painter for himself and never intended as an article for sale. We know that Vermeer worked very slowly, sold few of his own products, and, to support his large family, did business as an art-dealer. When he died, there were still many of his pictures in his house, and it is highly significant of the value of the Vienna canvas that this painting met a special fate. The artist's wife handed it over to her mother-in-law as a pledge for a loan of a thousand guilders that the latter had made to her son, so she claimed, the previous year. When other creditors, including the baker, tried to contest the mother-in-law's right to it and to include it in the public auction, she put up a vigorous and successful defence. Reading through the documents, one cannot avoid the suspicion that there was a desire to get this picture into safe-keeping before Vermeer's widow filed her petition in bankruptcy.

It is known that at the end of the eighteenth century "The Painter in His Studio" belonged to Baron Gottfried van Swieten. He was the son of the celebrated Gerard van Swieten, who went from Leyden to the Viennese court and there carved out a successful career as a statesman and as physician in ordinary to Maria Theresa. Gottfried died in 1803 without issue, and his property was consequently dispersed. Ten years later, Johann Rudolf Count Czernin bought the picture, according to his personal records, from a saddler for fifty paper guilders as a work by the then more famous Pieter de Hooch. Having been sold from the Czernin collection in 1942, it was acquired by the Vienna Gallery in 1946.

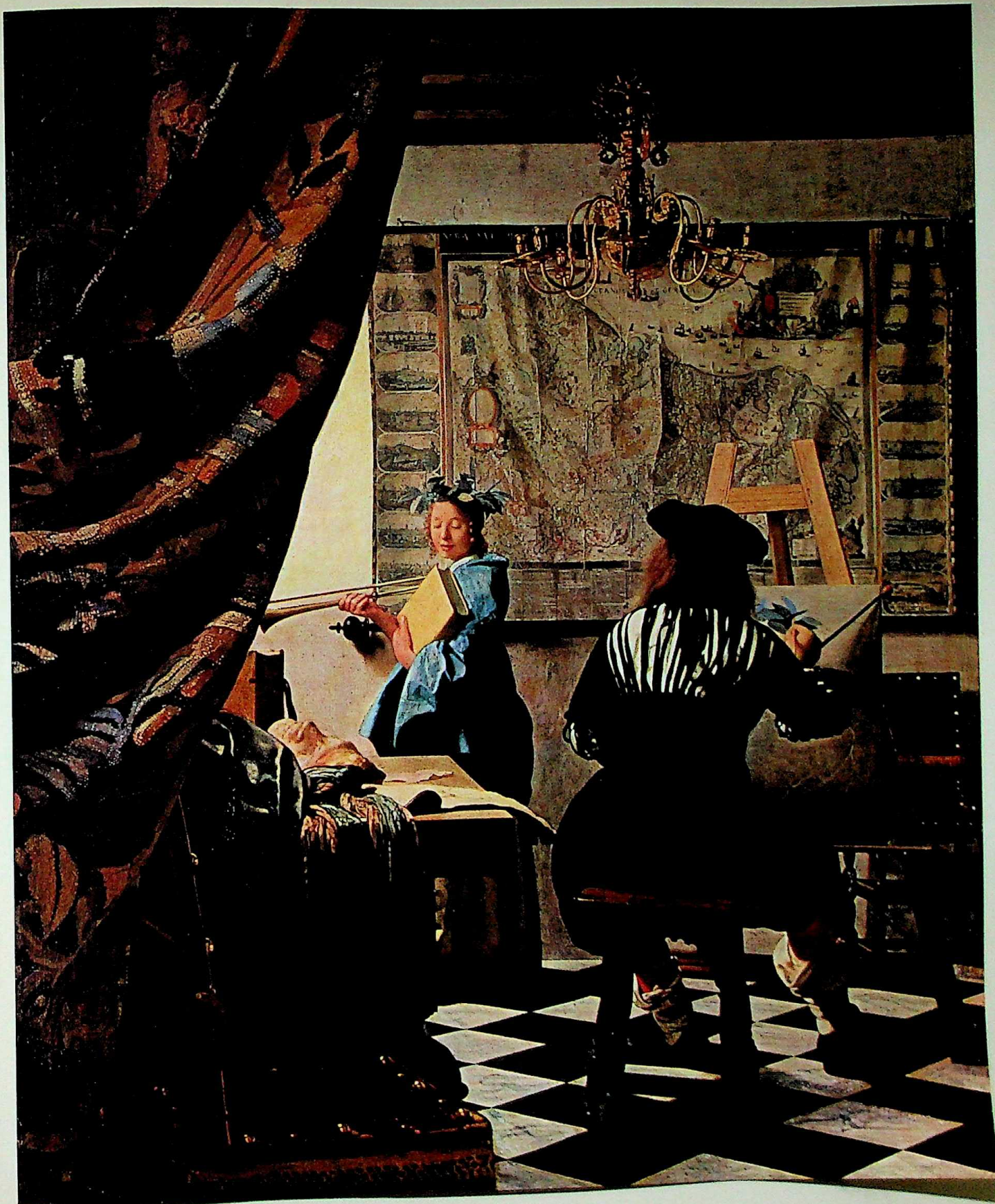


PLATE 48

JAN STEEN

Born 1626 at Leyden, died there 1676

THE WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

Canvas, 105 × 145 cm. (41³/₈ × 57¹/₈ in.) Signed and dated 16(63) bottom left on the barrel. Inv. No. 791

In contrast to those of, say, Ter Borch (see Plate 46), Jan Steen's works are among the purest examples of genre painting. With him, art so to speak began with telling stories, describing incidents, and illustrating proverbs; and what first captivates the beholder are precisely these "tales"—representations of the customs, good or bad, of his people on festive occasions and in daily life, domestic scenes, trivial happenings in taverns—in fact, the "content". Likewise, Bible scenes, transferred by Steen to his own time and country, and even portraits and landscapes turned automatically under his brush into genre pictures. It is significant that, in referring to this depicter of his own Dutch environment, people mention his delightful gift for observation, his profound knowledge of human nature, and his kindly, down-to-earth humour, which kept him well away from all moralizing; and that they lay stress on the vitality of his character and his tremendous, overflowing *joie de vivre*, in the belief that they have thereby also got at an essential trait of his nature as an artist.

Nevertheless, it would be a great mistake to regard Steen's pictures as insubstantial. His most important works in particular certainly do not spend themselves in anecdotal effects. The representation usually conceals several different layers of meaning, which only a thorough investigation will disclose. Thus, with special reference to "The World Upside-down", one's first impression is of a very lively, rather coarse genre scene, in which people are laughing, drinking, teasing, behaving seriously, making music, joking, and playing, in considerable confusion. It seems to be just a medley of figures, each acting its own separate part. Yet one can easily discern that every character and every object "means" something, that it represents a proverb, even if this can often no longer be interpreted. Finally, beyond the individual references, one looks for the picture's overall significance, expressible in a summarizing title. The painter himself could not refrain from leaving a written reference to this general tenor, for he has leant against one of the stairs on the right a tablet inscribed: *IN WEELDE SIET TOE* (In prosperity be prudent).

Steen's greatest artistic achievement, however, consists in having welded together formally the various layers of this "content", uniting them as a meaningful whole that in its turn brings out the significance of each separate element. Particularly notable is the way we are guided from one figure to another. Naturally, the eye is first caught by the "girl", who directs her curious smile, at once reflective and vague, straight at the beholder. Her sole active link with her dissolute cavalier is the gesture of offering him a glass of wine, while the only sign of attention he gives in her direction is to rest his leg on her knee. For his smiling face is turned towards the old maid behind him, and his left hand clutches impudently at her apron, from which some of the roses have fallen ("He throws roses to the pigs"). She, however, pays no attention at all to him, but addresses herself insistently, finger raised, to an even odder, Quakerish figure with a surly face. He does not care a jot about what she is saying, and evidently wants to appear to be reading. No doubt his book is open for the benefit of the duck, which—in this attitude a symbol of corruption and ruin—turns away indifferently towards the violinist. Thus, all around, content and form combine to bring about a permanent conflict between union and disunion, to provoke a constant movement of the eye from object to object, and to give an impression of universal unrest that accords excellently with the picture's general significance. However, to prevent it from breaking up into its elements, the artist has stabilized his composition by creating symmetries, which one hardly notices at first, around the central "couple". They embrace not only the main figures but also details such as the vessel and hat on the floor.

The compositional ideas are considerably reinforced by the colour. In the "girl", we meet the combination of yellow, blue and white that Vermeer used to express tenderest, purest femininity (see Plate 47). How Steen has perverted its meaning by "muddying" the colours! And how eloquent is the strange juxtaposition of coppery-brown, brick-red, and white in the rake! Really to appreciate this artist's eminent painterly qualities, one must also enjoy to the full the cheerful harmony of orange-yellow, white, and salmon of the child in the high-chair, and lose oneself in the play of extremely delicate rose, grey, green, and lilac nuances over the walls.

"The World Upside-down" comes from the estate of Duke Charles Alexander of Lorraine, Governor of the Austrian Netherlands, who died in 1780 at Brussels. It was valued in the inventory of his effects at 600 guilders, and was entered there as *un tableau représentant un ménage renversé, par Jean Steen*. In 1781, it already had a place in the Belvedere. Subsequent catalogues usually refer to it as "Dissolute Company", and the title "The World Upside-down", which is obviously the product of a misinterpreted translation of the note in the above-mentioned inventory, did not appear until 1925.



PLATE 49

JAN VAN GOYEN

Born 1596 at Leyden, died 1656 at The Hague

VIEW OF DORDRECHT ACROSS THE OUDE MAAS

Canvas, 103.5 × 133.5 cm. (40³/₄ × 52⁵/₈ in.) Signed and dated 1644. Inv. No. 6450

Jan van Goyen is the real founder of the typically Dutch landscape painting which, in the second or third decade of the seventeenth century, began to develop away from that of the immediately preceding period, when Northern landscape painting had been under Flemish influence. Instead of combining obtrusive, brightly coloured, anecdotal accessory figures with carefully related dark coulisses of trees, artists now above all strove after spatial and atmospheric unity, and investigated the many variations of light. Jan himself had learned the earlier style from his teacher Esaias van de Velde, but he very soon gave up polychromy and multifariousness in general. By way of an at first almost ascetic monochromy associated with an extreme economy of subject-matter, he eventually achieved in his renderings of air and light a new and most delicately modulated colourfulness.

The Vienna picture seems monochromatic to begin with, its lower part painted in a rather strong, cool ochre and the vast expanse of sky in a much warmer, paler one. Yet just as our initial impression of formal homogeneousness in the waves rapidly gives way to one of rich diversity, so it is with the colour. The dark, blackish-brown strip right in the foreground gives way to a bright, almost golden zone, which runs nearly parallel to the bottom edge of the picture, though it widens out slightly towards the right. Beyond this come more areas of variously thick shade, where the colour of water inclines here to green, there to brown or even red, and sometimes appears transparently clear, sometimes muddy. Leftwards from the centre of the horizon, where two birds soar, a thin, flat stretch of land only gradually gains solidity. Above grey water that is almost calm out of the wind, one can discern a brownish shore, houses with bluish roofs, and verdigris-coloured trees. To the right, on the other hand, the shore draws nearer, and there the Groote Kerk of Dordrecht dominates its setting with its huge, characteristic east tower: at the very top, both clock-faces give the time as ten to five. It is above all the church's blue and yellow roof and the trees along the river-bank with their light, transparent green that introduce very effective, delicate accents of colour into the picture.

While discovering this chromatic richness, the eye also takes in the abundant movement, which greatly heightens the impression of space, and makes one positively feel the tingling atmosphere. Primarily it is the boats that give visible expression to the flow of motion. Thus, a moderately large vessel proceeds from the left with swelling sails that reach up in a curve towards the sky, and its impetus is countered from the right, but somewhat nearer the picture-plane, by a rowing-boat loaded with passengers. Yet the ships, which escort the eye into the far distance, are merely recorders of the atmospheric forces. It is, after all, the keen wind blowing from the left that fills out the canvas of the biggish sailing-vessel and speeds it on, while giving trouble to the oarsmen. Their progress is accompanied by the light, which advances and spreads from the right in opposition to the wind. This contest recurs in the sky, where the clouds ascend, damp and heavy with rain, from the left edge, seem to be dissolving, and then pile up again above the tower—though the blue is gaining control on the extreme right. Almost everything is thus in motion except the church, which stands firm, and lends stability to the whole. No doubt this is why the artist was so fond of the building, which he often used as a point of rest in his compositions.

During his youth, Jan travelled through France and the Netherlands right down into the south, and later repeatedly toured the whole of Holland, particularly along the great waterways. There are thousands of sketches by him documenting these journeys, which provided the objective foundations of his pictures. The personal calligraphy of the draughtsman also plays a very important rôle in the painted works. In the Vienna picture, it appears loose, fluid, and often expressive. Every brush-stroke scores at the first attempt, and is frequently set on the canvas without any underpainting. Even if the work did not bear the date 1644, it would still be identifiable as one from the artist's maturity.

The painting was only acquired for the Gallery in 1923, on the Dutch art-market, but the line of its previous owners can be traced back to beyond 1842, when it appeared in an auction at The Hague.

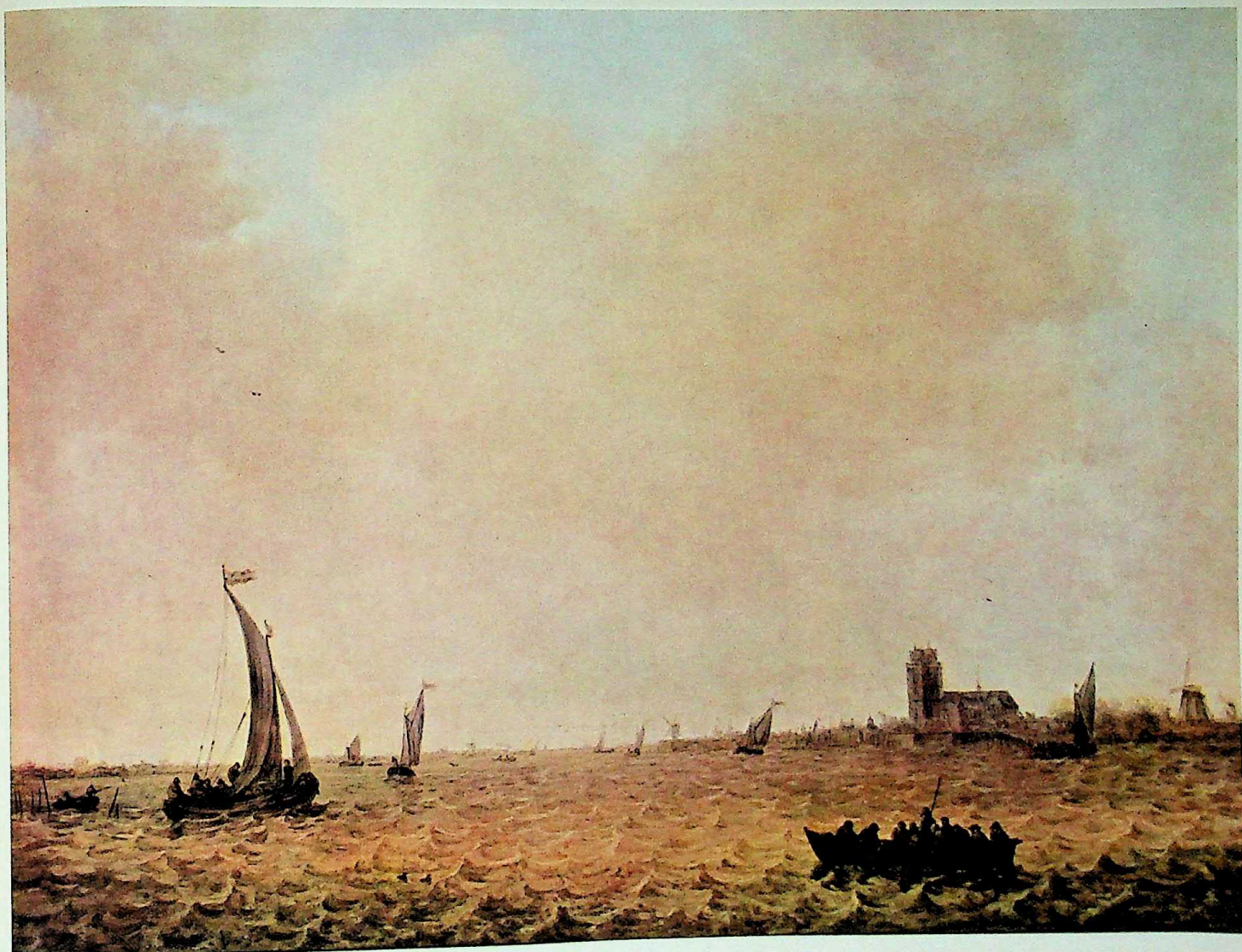


PLATE 50

AERT VAN DER NEER

*Born about 1603-4 at Amsterdam, died there 1677**FISHING BY MOONLIGHT*Canvas, 66.5 × 86.5 cm. (26 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 34 in.) Signed. Inv. No. 6487

No pictures by Aert van der Neer are known to date from before 1635. This lends some support to the information provided by fairly old sources that he first approached art as a dilettante, and only began painting at about the age of thirty. Moreover, he later partially interrupted this career; for during the years 1658-62 he kept an inn, which, to judge by the rent he paid for it, must have been a fairly pretentious one. Such additional occupations were by no means uncommon among Dutch painters at that period. Jan Steen likewise ran a tavern, while Van Goyen was for ever speculating, often on a large scale, in houses, land, and tulips, an activity that eventually brought about his ruin. After five years as a publican, Aert was also in financial straits, but his insolvency led him to become a full-time painter again.

Aert van der Neer's landscape painting goes back to the same sources as that of Van Goyen. The Vienna Gallery has one of his early pictures, a "Well-watered Wooded Region" with cows and people in the foreground (Inv. No. 429), which is given a very Flemish look by its dark, varied coloration and the strong contrasts in its lighting. Aert too, however, very soon gave up his initial colourfulness, and developed a kind of tonal painting. What is more, he did so in two specialized fields where this renunciation and his taste for a certain monochromy were quite appropriate: in winter and night scenes. At Vienna, he is represented in both these categories, for the Gallery boasts, on the one hand, a signed "Winter Landscape" with skaters and golfers (Inv. No. 1768), and on the other, an early "Moonlit Village" (Inv. No. 436), also signed and still very dark, as well as this "Fishing by Moonlight", which is a mature late work and one of the master's best.

For his night pieces, Aert liked to choose the late evening, when fishermen and country folk were still at work—that last hour of dusk when the rising moon has already taken command. In the present work, it is the moon almost alone that supplies the magic of an incredible colour-effect developed just as richly on the surface of the water as in the cloudy sky. Next to the most delicate nuances appear strong, almost harsh contrasts; soft light struggles against menacing darkness; groups of warm and cool hues mutually enhance each other; small and minute forms are superimposed in endless profusion on broad areas of colour. Nearly dazzled by the full moon and its quivering reflection, the eye seeks repose on the river's calm surface, which seems to be lit from underneath. It explores shadowy inlets, gets lost in the darkness of the bank, and then emerges again into the unreal, silvery light. The talent of a great colourist has here been united with the sensibility of a poet.

There is nothing very ambitious about the spatial structure. If the towered ruin on the left and the houses almost hidden by trees on the right give the picture stability, its calmness and repose come from the many horizontals, such as the brown, earthy strip with the fence in the foreground, the sandbank with the nets, the spits of land jutting out into the water on either side, the slender rowing-boat with its three occupants arranged like a still-life (woman, child, and oarsman in rose, yellow, blue, black, and white), and the lie of nearly all the other vessels. Rising hardly noticeably from the left in a broad, shallow arc, the horizon is cut on the right by the dark peninsula with its houses and trees. The river runs deep and very slowly, but the direction of its current is clearly shown by the nets leading obliquely into the picture from the foreground, and by the three sailing-boats that, aligned in a perfectly straight diagonal, lead the eye towards the part of the horizon where no land divides the water from the sky. Right in front, the start of this line is marked by the moon's glittering reflection, literally caught in the nets.

Whereas the other three Van der Neers mentioned above all belong to the Gallery's older stock, "Fishing by Moonlight" was only acquired in 1924, on the Viennese art-market.



PLATE 51

JAKOB ISACKZ. VAN RUISDAEL

Born 1628 or 1629 at Haarlem, died there 1682

THE BIG WOOD

Canvas, 140 × 180 cm. (55¹/₈ × 70⁷/₈ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 426

Apart from Van Goyen, Jakob van Ruisdael is undoubtedly the most eminent Dutch landscapist. Indeed, he probably ranks among the most outstanding of all specialists in the field of pure landscape, and the effect of his art on the whole of subsequent landscape painting down to Impressionism in the latter part of the nineteenth century can hardly be overestimated. It has rightly been observed that Ruisdael is one of those artists who never become dated and have always continued to be appreciated, each century or generation finding in him whatever it was looking for. If the very early eighteenth century admired his masterly depiction of nature, Rousseau's period, about fifty years later, had a special understanding of his enthusiasm for it. Goethe saw in the works above all the poetic quality and in the artist a melancholy dreamer escaping from the world, and he thought that he recognized Ruisdael's most important achievement in the "perfect symbolism" of these pictures. Then Goethe's esteem was followed by the awed respect of the Barbizon school, for whom Ruisdael was their great precursor in discovering the *paysage intime*. Our period, on the other hand, has come increasingly to recognize in him the great composer who, though profoundly familiar with the elements of nature, never painted just any fragment of it that he happened to encounter, but rather exalted his experience of nature to a work of art by imposing on it pictorial form. Owing to this new perception, the Vienna Gallery's "Big Wood", in which the orderliness of construction is particularly evident, is today regarded as one of the painter's outstanding works.

Two lines of movement crossing each other in the foreground provide the composition with its theme. Significantly, one finds this spatial arrangement being tried out in a great many landscapes painted round about the middle of the seventeenth century. Obviously expressing a desire of the times, it reveals the latter's fundamental interest in, so to speak, completely braced space, and its purely Baroque endeavour to extend the spatial sequence dynamically in every direction by means of additional elements. Ruisdael's picture reduces all these experiments to a clear and effective system.

As suggested, the essential framework of the painting, and also the key to its meaning, is provided by the intersection of the deeply rutted cart-track with the stream. That is why so much care has been devoted to the construction of this zone, for all the rest of the picture is contemplated by the spectator outwards from and in relation to the crossing. If one begins by following the stream, it leads to the foot of a very dark and comparatively low arboreal coulisse comprising a dense mass of apparently young trees, which only thin out slightly towards the right. The inky, blue-green-black strip of water emerging from the darkness of the wood is made even more mysterious by the way a slight rise in the clayey ground prevents one seeing exactly whence it comes. A reddish stump on this prominence, its light-coloured flank, and an island of dark heather before it are exactly aligned and accompany the stream on one side, while the shadowy edge of the thicket performs a similar function on the other. These two boundaries diverge rather like a funnel towards the track, and within the brightness of this expanding form, the stream extends its dark band. It forms subsidiary channels at the side, and then, more playful and even rippling slightly in the middle of the picture, crosses the track as a broad, shallow course, after which it completely disappears in the obscurity of the shadows and the mossy ground. The track also forms a kind of funnel, which opens up wide towards the beholder and, aided by the ruts, draws his eye into depth.

With all the sobriety of its structure and the moderation in the observing of details, this picture displays the full greatness and gravity of Ruisdael's mature period. It has the extreme restraint of private emotion that characterizes his works from the late fifties. Subsequently, there would be a turn towards the emphasis of mood and feeling.

In 1809, exactly a decade before Goethe's article on Ruisdael as a poet (*Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, 1816), "The Big Wood" was acquired from a Mannheim dealer. A few years later, the Gallery gained another, approximately contemporary work by the artist (Inv. No. 456). This very charming little picture also shows a woodland scene, and came from the H. von Reith collection at Vienna. A third landscape was in the Secular Treasury as early as 1773 (Inv. No. 449). It is one of those views of mountains with thundering torrent, towering pines, and waterfall that were so popular during Ruisdael's time, and in which the painter for a while kept very close to Everdingen.



PART TWO
FLANDERS AND THE SOUTH

PLATE 52

ANDREA MANTEGNA

Born 1431 at Isola di Cartura (near Piazzola), died 1506 at Mantua

ST SEBASTIAN

Wood, 68 × 30 cm. (28³/₄ × 11³/₄ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 301

At a moment in his career when he had just completed his first masterpiece—his share of the decoration of the Ovetari Chapel in the Eremitani Church at Padua—and obtained the contract for the San Zeno altarpiece, Mantegna hesitated to leave for Mantua, even though Ludovico Gonzaga was growing increasingly eager and impatient to have him there as his Court Painter. Andrea certainly had many engagements still waiting to be fulfilled, as well as a marked taste for independence. In particular, however, he was held back by his very close ties with the group of humanists in Padua and Verona. He had come to be associated with this circle not just as an artist but as a man of learning, a fellow-researcher, and a highly regarded expert on ancient monuments. One of these scholars placed him among the leading epigraphists of the period, while another dedicated his volume of ancient inscriptions to him. Particularly instructive is the account, by a member of this group, of a trip to Lake Garda in search of Classical and Early Christian monuments and inscriptions. Led by an *imperator* and two *consules* (one of whom was Mantegna) and garlanded with ivy and laurel, the learned friends sang joyfully to the music of the zither, as they rowed across the *campo nettunio* in richly decorated boats. Although these enthusiasts seem at times to have been playing a romantic game, the penetration of the Classical world into everyday life and the odd way in which earnest study was coupled with whimsical make-believe concealed their noble conviction that they were reviving the spirit of Antiquity.

As a subject for a picture, St Sebastian fitted in perfectly with this attitude. According to the legend, the saint was born in Narbonne, though his family was Milanese. He became an officer in the Roman army, and attained very high rank, as a commander of the Pretorian Guard. At first he was favoured by Diocletian, but he fell into disgrace for helping some Christian prisoners and for revealing that he too was a Christian. The Emperor handed him over to his Numidian archers, who tied him to a column in the Colosseum and, according to the Golden Legend, shot arrows at him until he looked like a hedgehog. Briefly then, the true subject of "St Sebastian" is the world of Classical Antiquity; while, up to a point, the Christian element in the work gives an acceptable air of reality to the image that Mantegna's period formed of this world. It is precisely *this* little picture that the artist signed, with full justification in Greek letters: *TO-EPTON-TOY-ANΔPEOY* (work of Andrea).

Mantegna's familiarity with the spirit of Classical architecture is apparent not only in the pure, clear architectural forms, but also in the pellucid exposure of the firm constructional methods. Judging by the Victories in the spandrels, the structure is probably part of a ruined triumphal arch, very badly damaged on the left but perfectly preserved on the right. A luxurious column of *giallo antico*, gilded on its base and capital, stands against a pier, slightly off centre. At the base of the pier, fragments of masonry and sculpture lie in a heap, and bits of sculpture are also piled up against the wall behind. It cannot be denied that this pagan world in ruins, which aroused a very different interest in the artist from that of an antiquarian, has a symbolic meaning.

The saint stands on a block of marble, no less "Classical" than his setting; though here again it is not just an imitation, but the rebirth of a spirit. All the movement of the figure is summarized in an S-curve, of which the artist has felt the plastic and space-defining qualities, the space itself being clarified by the arrows. At the same time the vertical lines of the architecture provide a rigid frame for the nude, counteracting any tendency towards excessive agitation in its contour. The landscape, analysed with the precision of a miniature painter, not only reflects the joyous discovery of nature, but actually imparts, by contrast, superhuman magnitude to the figure of the saint.

Critics are more or less at one in placing this small, unusually richly painted work during the period of the San Zeno "Madonna Enthroned", that is, before Mantegna moved to Mantua. If the landscape recalls the frescoes in the Ovetari Chapel, the dynamic figure of the saint is closely related to those of the San Zeno altarpiece. Moreover, in Padua during 1457-58 there was an outbreak of the plague, against which it was customary to invoke, in particular, St Sebastian. Jacopo Antonio Marcello, the governor of Padua, wrote to Ludovico Gonzaga in March, 1459, begging the marquis to be patient for a few more days so that Andrea could finish a small work (*operetta*) for him, Marcello. Out of all the pictures the artist produced during these years, this diminutive best fits the gem-like painting in the Vienna Gallery. The panel is recorded in the inventory of 1659 as being already in the collection of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, who also acquired two late monochromes by, or after designs by, Mantegna: "Abraham Sacrificing Isaac" and "David with the Head of Goliath".

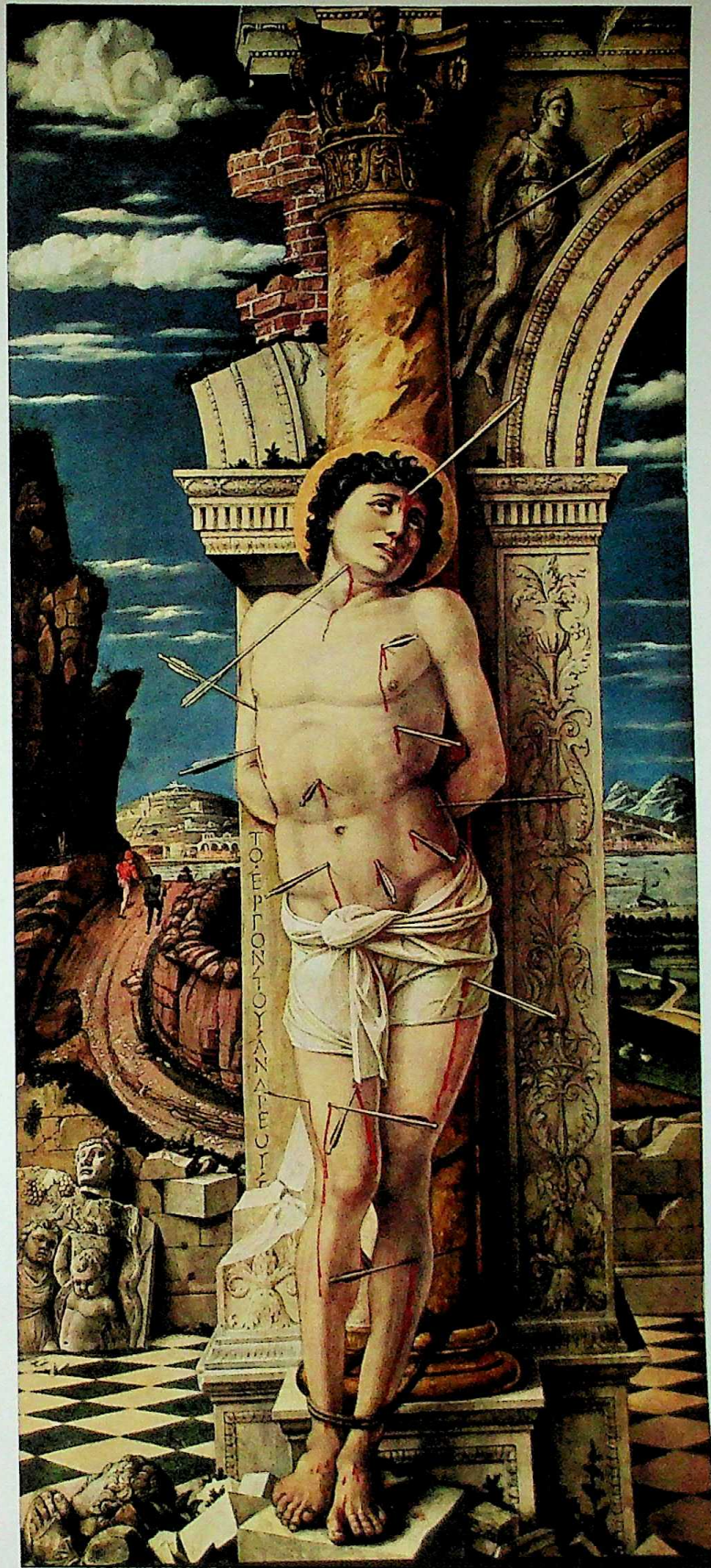


PLATE 53

GIORGIONE (GIORGIO DA CASTELFRANCO)

Born 1477-78 at Castelfranco Veneto, died 1510 at Venice

THE THREE PHILOSOPHERS

Canvas, 123.5 × 144.5 cm. (48⁵/₈ × 56⁷/₈ in.) Inv. No. 111

In the first edition of his *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550) Vasari wrote that Giorgione was always courteous and well behaved, persistently amorous, and very fond of the lute. When studying design he was so favoured by Nature that, according to Vasari, he fell in love with her charms, and did not want to include anything in his work that he had not drawn from life. Indeed, Giorgione's dreamy, pantheistic devotion to beauty, music, humanity, and nature made him one of the clearest exponents of Venetian culture during the first decade of the sixteenth century, and of its new feeling for life.

Among the artist's few secure works the painting of the three mysterious wise men in the Vienna Gallery holds a very high place. Infused with a deep and contemplative romanticism, a truly poetic quality, it is one of Giorgione's most personal expressions, which he returned to again and again, clarifying, correcting, and polishing it. Clearly, no other work of his was ever so close to his heart.

Along with the trees that almost become characters in the scene, it is above all the dark mass of the rocky coulisse that seizes the attention, within the framework of such an amazingly rich and deeply felt depiction of nature. This feature was even bigger before the canvas was cut on the left side by rather less than eight inches, probably at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Giving so much space and importance to a "motif" from nature that is so formless and in itself so ordinary was a new and revolutionary step in the history of painting. This remains true even though the spring and plants (ivy and fig) revealed during a recent restoration may have a symbolic significance. Corresponding to this dark, colourless hollow is the bright, variedly coloured convex group of the three men, the curve of which is taken up by the tree-trunks behind. No less ingenious in its conception and refined in its solution is the stepped "pedestal" on which the figures have been set at different levels.

As for the meaning of the subject matter, Marcantonio Michiel, who recorded the Venetian art collections of his day, gave the earliest surviving description of the picture, in 1525: "The oil painting on canvas of the three philosophers in a landscape, two standing and the other seated and looking up at the sunlight, with the rock so wonderfully imitated..." In later inventories the three philosophers became mathematicians measuring the height of the sky, astronomers, geometers, even surveyors. There was also no lack of more precise interpretations: the three ages of human learning (Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance); the three phases of Aristotelianism; Pythagoras, Ptolemy, and Archimedes; the young Marcus Aurelius being instructed by two philosophers on the Caelian hill; King Evander, his son Pallas, and their guest Aeneas before the rock of the future Capitol.

Meanwhile, the explanation of the figures as three wise men persisted in the variant that they were the three Magi. It is the very plants referred to above, with their Christological significance, that bore out this interpretation, and they often appeared as symbols in the art of Giorgione's times. A commentary on St Luke's Gospel, probably dating from the fifth century and still highly regarded during the Renaissance, provides a literary source for the idea. It refers to a *mons victorialis* on which the astronomer-Magi met each year to await the appearance of the star announcing the Messiah. Here there was a small cave, and the hill was made most charming by springs and trees of rare beauty. Giorgione has thought out a new approach to the subject, reworking the substratum of old ideas in accordance with the humanist spirit of his milieu, and transforming a richness of conception liable to many different interpretations into this great work of perfect artistic unity.

Michiel recorded the picture as being in the house of Senator Taddeo Contarini by 1525. A century later it was in the collection of Domenico Della Nave, and round about 1636 Lord Fielding, then British ambassador extraordinary to the Venetian Republic, acquired it for Charles I. It reached England just before the Civil War; and when, after the former king's execution, Cromwell put the royal collection up for sale, the greater part—including "The Three Philosophers"—was bought by Leopold Wilhelm, reaching Vienna shortly before 1659. Besides "The Three Philosophers", the foremost Giorgione collection in the world now comprises the early "Adoration of the Shepherds"; the "Laura" portrait, which is the only Giorgione authenticated by a contemporary inscription; the Leonardesque "Boy with an Arrow"; and the interesting late portrait of Girolamo Marcello, seen by Michiel in the sitter's home in 1525.



PLATE 54

GIOVANNI BELLINI

Born c. 1432-35, died 1516 at Venice

YOUNG WOMAN HOLDING A MIRROR

Wood, 62 × 79 cm. (24 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 31 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) Signed and dated 1515. Inv. No. 97

In front of a smooth, green wall pierced by a large window, which gives a view of the country-side and draws some of its atmosphere into the room, a young woman is sitting, naked, on a covered bench. Although she is busy preening herself with the aid of two mirrors, her expression has a hint of melancholy and reverie. It is not easy to classify this picture. One must take care, in the first place, not to regard it simply as a genre scene; but neither can it just be considered a portrait. On the other hand, its essential realism seems to tell against mythological or allegorical interpretations, which are made even more unlikely by there being no additional tokens of a Venus or a Vanity. And yet its air of unspoiled, innocent charm should not lead one to see the figure merely as the incarnation of beauty. Somehow, implicitly and without commitment, the picture contains material for all these interpretations; and, harmonizing it with a new grasp of psychology and feeling for nature, it expresses the indefinable "mood" that is so often the true content of Venetian pictures from this period.

However, as a subject (whatever its exact meaning) this particular work forms a unique exception in Venetian art of its day. All the more surprising is the undoubtedly genuine signature of Giovanni Bellini, a painter chiefly of religious themes—particularly Madonnas—and portraits, though during the last thirty years of his long life he was engaged in producing large history paintings for the Doge's Palace. When Isabella d'Este kept asking him insistently for a mythological subject, Giovanni replied that he was a religious painter, and finally sent her a devotional work. Where the princess failed her brother Alfonso d'Este succeeded, and almost twenty years later, in 1514, he received the famous "Feast of the Gods" for his *Camerino d'alabastro*. The following year it was joined by the Vienna panel, one of the last paintings of the aged master.

Purity and clarity of composition are the distinguishing features of this late work. By means of a system of horizontal and vertical lines, and the opposition of rectangular fields of different size and colour, a remarkable effect of balance has been achieved. The figure itself is firmly incorporated into this scheme through the extremely sensitive contour that climbs almost vertically up the side of the window, and the horizontal part of the left arm, which prolongs the line of the hills. Experienced against this system of lines parallel to the picture plane, the sense of space and plastic form created by the action of the limbs is enhanced, as in the tilted and slightly foreshortened rectangle defined by the bent arms and the right shoulder. In this connection, one should note the mysterious action of the mirror, crossed by the left forearm and its image, and revealing the back of the head. Above all, however, it is the red drapery that helps the eye to encircle the figure and comprehend it. With calm, broad folds it extends along the bench; disappears behind the pale, beautiful body; emerges to pass loosely over the left thigh; climbs upwards, darting and flickering, over the belly; reappears near the right shoulder; envelops the upper-arm with calmer, more delicate folds; and ends in a linear flourish near the right elbow. Even though the red of the drapery has lost much of its brilliance in the course of time, this flare of colour is itself essential to the conception of the picture, as are also the blue and green of the luxurious caul, which pick up the colours of the room and of the view through the window.

According to the 1659 inventory, the panel was then already in Leopold Wilhelm's collection. Volume one (1720) of Storffer's painted "inventory", produced when the collection was arranged as a gallery in the Stallburg, shows the picture with its original green background in the right half. Later, black was added behind the figure, and its removal in 1937 unfortunately somewhat damaged the paint underneath.

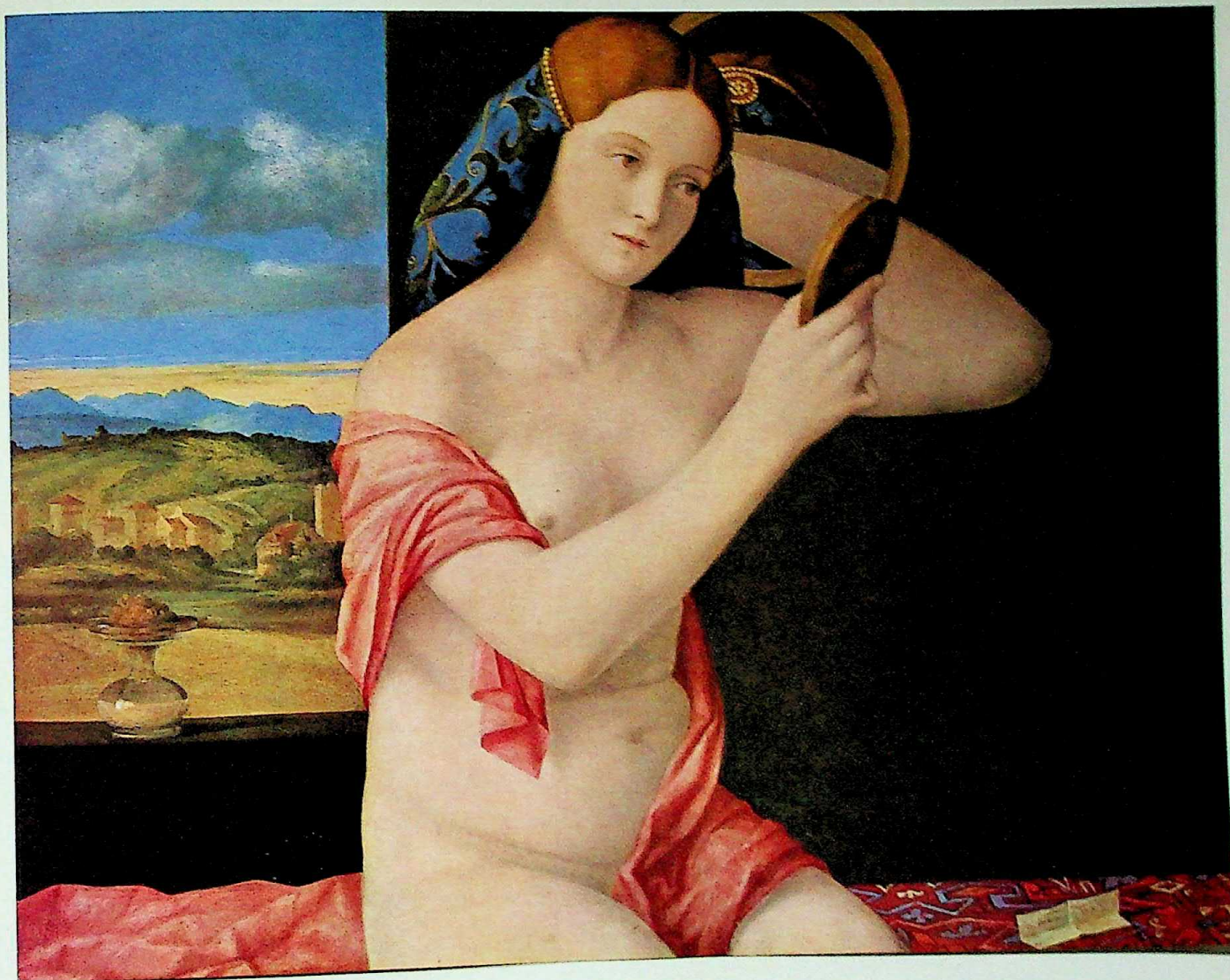


PLATE 55

TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLIO)

Born 1477-89 at Pieve di Cadore, died 1576 at Venice

THE GYPSY MADONNA

Wood, 65.8 × 83.8 cm. (26 × 32³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 95

The Titian collection in the Vienna Gallery is remarkable not only for its size, but also for the extremely high quality of most of the works, which, moreover, reflect almost every phase of the artist's progress.

In this long chain of development, extending over about seventy years, the first link is the so-called "Gypsy Madonna", one of the earliest surviving works by Titian. This magnificent picture, in excellent condition, is therefore an important document in the history of art. It clearly shows Titian's artistic descent from Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione, but also the beginnings of his personal style. Indeed, this was already sufficiently strong to influence in its turn the work of the old Bellini—as the "Young Woman Holding a Mirror" (Plate 54) shows. This interaction between the three painters, one so much older than the other two but all working near each other during the first ten years of the sixteenth century, is one of the most interesting and complicated problems of art history.

Titian's picture owes its subject-matter to Bellini, who produced many variations on the theme of a half-length Virgin with standing Child, preferring to develop his compositions vertically with a symmetrical arrangement adapted to this upward emphasis. It was not Bellini who invented the horizontal type of composition that he too used during his late years, but rather Giorgione, whose art is also significantly related to the "Gypsy Madonna", particularly in the landscape. The view through the window in this picture also appears, as a small detail, in Giorgione's famous Dresden "Venus", which according to Vasari was actually finished by Titian. One is inclined to the view that he took the landscape motif from the "Gypsy Madonna" and developed it more fully in the Dresden work, though the essentially Giorgionesque mood of both cannot be denied. However, a radiograph taken of the "Gypsy Madonna" during the most recent restoration has revealed another, fundamentally Bellinesque landscape under the present one, with a higher horizon and a tree almost in the middle of the window space. It has also become clear that the original grouping of the figures was closer to Bellini, despite many Giorgionesque details.

One of the sources describes how Titian would remove a half-finished work from his easel, returning to it weeks or months later to weigh it up like an enemy and correct it without pity. In this, too, he resembles Giorgione, and a typical example of the approach is provided by the "Gypsy Madonna". In painting it Titian eagerly absorbed the methods of his teachers and paragons, but then, as his own severe judge, he suppressed every sign of dependence and achieved his own new style.

The originality of this picture lies, first and foremost, in the imposing breadth with which the two figures are fitted into the composition. New, too, is the way their forms have been merged into an indivisible whole by means of the containing silhouette, the common direction of their gaze, and the simple grandeur and calm of the movement. New, finally, is the luminous, fleecy effect of the paint, in which light, colour, and surfaces melt together and become one.

It is the landscape, the lines of which are so closely related to the figure group, that establishes the poetic mood of the picture, acting as a kind of prelude to it. The splendid cascade of folds formed by the blue mantle takes up and enhances the blue of the distant mountains, contrasting with the Virgin's soft hand. This, framed by the green-gold changing to red of the mantle's lining, could almost be described as the focal point of the design. Towards the right, the clear, almost whitish, pallor of the Child's flesh stands out against the strong, luminous red, with its deep shadows, of his mother's dress. No doubt it was to enhance this effect that Titian kept the Virgin's flesh tones noticeably dark, while also aiming, in his choice of colours, at a very personal conception of reality. The curtain behind the figures provides an accompaniment to the principal melodic theme of the work as it is read from left to right. It includes passages of form and colour that deviate from Titian's original conception and were introduced while work was actually in progress. This also happened in the Vienna "Madonna with the Cherries" (Inv. No. 118), which represents the very next phase of Titian's development.

The "Gypsy Madonna", finished shortly before 1510, is minutely described in the 1659 inventory and recorded there as an autograph Titian. According to Storffer (vol. 3; 1733), it was used in the Stallburg as an overdoor. In 1782 the panel was in the Belvedere, and a century later it entered the new museum on the Maria Theresien-Platz. The picture gained its present title during the second half of the nineteenth century.



PLATE 56

TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLIO)

Born 1477-89 at Pieve di Cadore, died 1576 at Venice

VIOLANTE ("LA BELLA GATTA")

Wood, 65.5 × 57 cm. (25⁵/₈ × 22¹/₂ in.) Inv. No. 65

As long ago as 1646, the painter and writer on art Carlo Ridolfi characterized this portrait very well in his biography of Titian in *Le meraviglie dell'arte*, when he wrote: "One of the most outstanding [portraits] was that of a certain lady known as La Gattina (the kitten), whose long hair, tied by a bright red ribbon and shining like spun gold, fell on her shoulders..." In the English inventory of the Della Nave collection dating from a few years earlier (1636-39; see notes on Plate 53), the panel appears under more or less the same name ("a woman called the fair catt"), with the comment, "a rare piece". Finally, the precise description of the portrait "of a Venetian lady called la bella gatta" in Leopold Wilhelm's 1659 inventory shows how highly it was valued. Teniers included it on the engraved frontispiece to his *Theatrum pictorium*.

It is not surprising that legends have grown up around such a portrait. The name Violante was used for the first time by Ridolfi in his Titian biography; not, however, in connection with "La bella gatta", but with the famous Prado "Bacchanal" painted by Titian for Alfonso d'Este's study, after the death of Giovanni Bellini. In the centre of the "Bacchanal" the artist has depicted a young woman lying down and dressed in red. She wears two pansies (*viola tricolor*) tucked into her bodice and another behind the ear; on her white blouse there is a little scroll bearing Titian's name. According to Ridolfi, the flowers refer to the name of the woman portrayed, Violante, with whom Titian was in love. Incidentally, in his biography of Palma Vecchio the same writer mentioned, among other portraits, one from the Della Nave collection of a Zattina, who held a little gilded paw (*una zampina dorata*) in her hand as a pun on her name. A little later, in 1660, the Venetian poet and painter Marco Boschini noted in his *Carta del navegar pittoresco* that the Violante loved by Titian was the daughter of Palma Vecchio. Ridolfi's explanation of the girl in the "Bacchanal" is very plausible, and Violante's special importance to Titian is made all the more credible by the violet that La bella gatta wears tucked into her bodice, although the portrait was not actually known as "Violante" until about the middle of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, it is hard to believe with Boschini that her father was Palma Vecchio, who never married and, as far as is known, had no illegitimate children. However, the notion had an important effect, for Palma now came to be acknowledged the author of the Vienna portrait as well as the father of its subject. Thus while all earlier references clearly ascribe the panel to Titian, the 1659 inventory calls it an autograph Palma Vecchio. Only recently has due weight been given to the old sources and the picture gained secure acceptance as an early Titian.

Today, the correctness of this attribution hardly needs further proof. That the Vienna figure really does represent Titian's Violante is borne out by its almost exact recurrence as St Bridget in one of the artist's early Madonna's, now in the Prado. The same young woman reappears in countless other works from this period, and indeed, to Titian and his circle, she represented ideal feminine beauty. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the Vienna picture reveals the mind and hand of Titian, who used the flower tucked into the bodice not just to indicate his sitter's name, but—with its blue, green, and white—as the key to, and the essential theme of, the whole work. Even if the blue is used in an almost old-fashioned way, in the yellow-brown the artist has anticipated seventeenth-century effects; and the wealth of delicate gradations in the luminous flesh tints and the cascade of luxuriant blonde hair is unbelievable. From among the excellent examples of Palma Vecchio's work as a portraitist one need only set beside the "Violante" his picture of a blonde woman dressed in blue and green (Inv. No. 63), which clearly derives from Titian's portrait, to become aware of the great difference in quality.

After being transferred to England with the Della Nave collection, the "Violante" was acquired by Leopold Wilhelm and went to Brussels. From there it was taken to Vienna, where, with the rest of the Archduke's collection, it was displayed in the Stallburg. In 1809 it was carried off to Paris by Napoleon, together with 436 other pictures, as spoils of war. It returned to Vienna in 1815—with 400 other pictures.

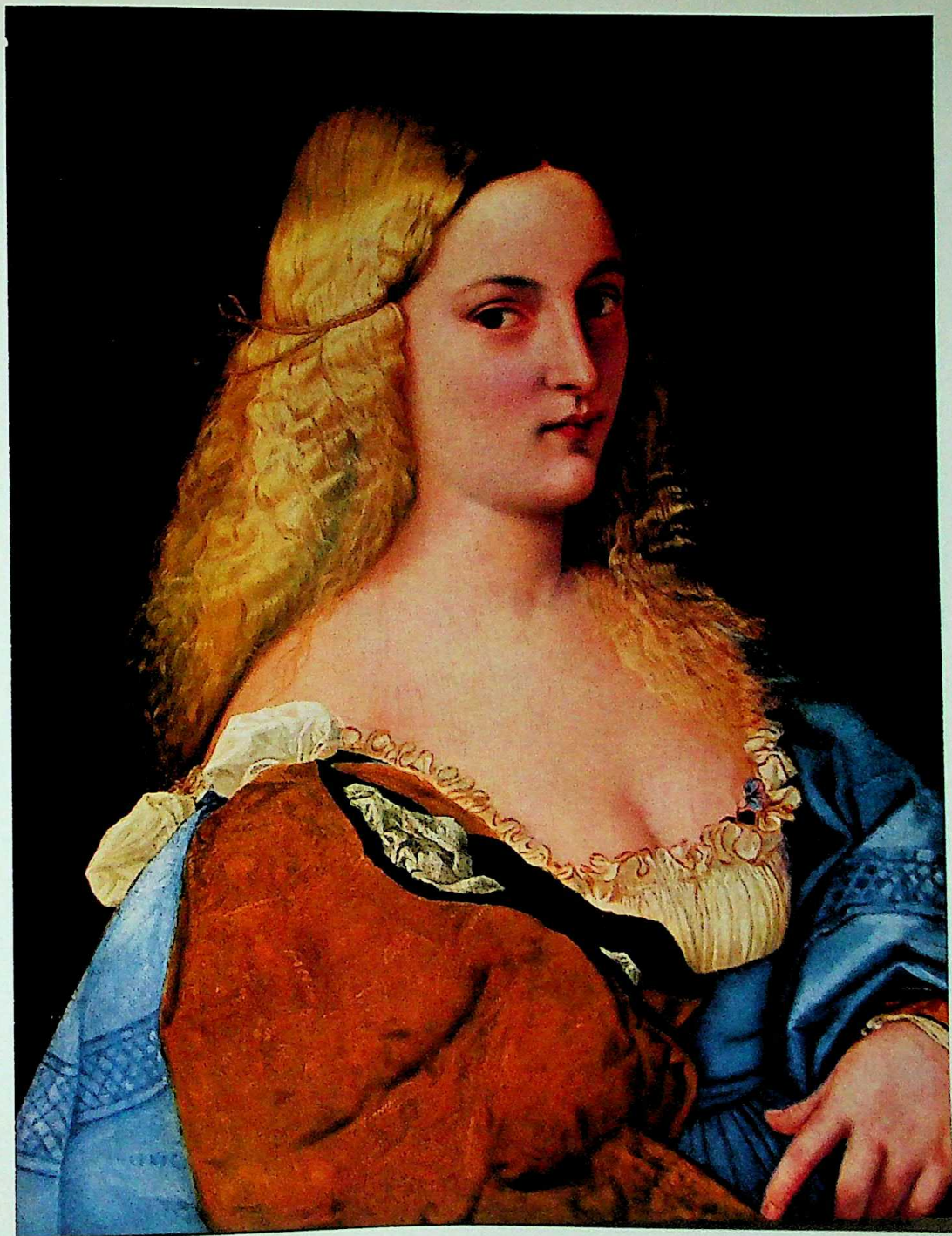


PLATE 57

TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLIO)

Born 1477-89 at Pieve di Cadore, died 1576 at Venice

JACOPO DE STRADA

Canvas, 125 × 95 cm. (49¹/₄ × 37³/₈ in.) Signed. Inv. No. 81

Goldsmith, designer, draughtsman, painter, and architect, art expert and agent; scholar and publicist; above all, student of iconography, inscriptions, coins, and languages—Jacopo de Strada, a Universal Man to an extent rare even during the Renaissance, was all these and a perfect courtier too. Born at Mantua in 1507 of Dutch parents, he must have had plenty of opportunity for far-ranging study, including extensive travel, especially in the Orient. He is first mentioned at the age of forty as being active as a goldsmith in Nuremberg. Then, from 1556 onwards, he worked more and more for the Habsburgs, receiving a regular salary as “antiquarius” (i.e. art expert) to the Emperors Ferdinand I, Maximilian II, and Rudolph II. From Munich, Prague, and Vienna his job took him to Paris and Lyon, but above all to Italy, where it included visits to Venice, Rome, and Mantua. Besides his work as an art adviser and agent between artist and client, he wrote an astonishing number of books (on coins, medals, inscriptions in Latin, Greek, Etruscan, Hebrew, Arabic, and Babylonian, as well as a polyglot dictionary in eleven different languages); and he was a passionate collector, above all of coins and medals. He assembled a remarkable “musaeum” and a library of over 3,000 volumes, including many Hebrew and Arabic texts. Not until the last ten years of his life did he retire from court service, and he died at Vienna in 1588.

Titian's portrait shows Jacopo as a mature man at the height of his powers. The artist was then getting on for eighty at least, and his sitter was about sixty. Almost half a century separates this picture from the Vienna “Violante”, and it is most interesting to follow the development of Titian's technique from the enamel-like smoothness of the early work to the fluid, free, painterly handling of his late style. However, for a late work—and even taking the *œuvre* as a whole—the energetic movement of the figure and the choice of deep, resonant colours is unusual. In no other Titian portrait has the subject been so firmly related to someone imagined as being outside the picture itself.

The antiquary, portrayed among his treasures, is proudly showing off an exceptionally fine work—a marble replica of Praxiteles's “Aphrodite Pselimene”. On the table there lies a marble torso, and behind it one can see a small figure in bronze. Above the cornice the lower part of a bronze Hercules is visible.

The coins and medals on the table and the books above the cornice all allude to Jacopo's chief interests as a collector and scholar, whereas the chain necklace, sword, and dagger are symbols of the noble rank conferred on him by Ferdinand I. Finally, the letter on the table, bearing Titian's address, testified to the sitter's personal ties with the greatest painter of his day.

On a cartouche in the top right-hand corner of the picture there is the following inscription: IACOBVS DE STRADA CIVIS ROMANVS CAES(ari)s ANTIQVARIVS ET COM(missarius) BELIC(ius) AN(no) AETAT(is) LI et C(hristi) MDLXVI. However, the cartouche was added at some date after the completion of the picture, and it has been established that Jacopo did not get to know Titian in Venice until 1567-68. At the beginning of 1568 Nicolò Stoppio, a bitter rival of Jacopo working in the service of the Duke of Bavaria, wrote that Jacopo's portrait was then being painted, and made out that Titian was doing it in exchange for services shortly to be rendered: Maximilian II probably did, in fact, buy Titian's “Diana and Callisto” on Jacopo's advice at about that time.

The “Jacopo de Strada” is first mentioned again in the 1659 inventory. At an unknown date it was transferred to the Treasury, and from there it passed, in 1780, to the Belvedere.

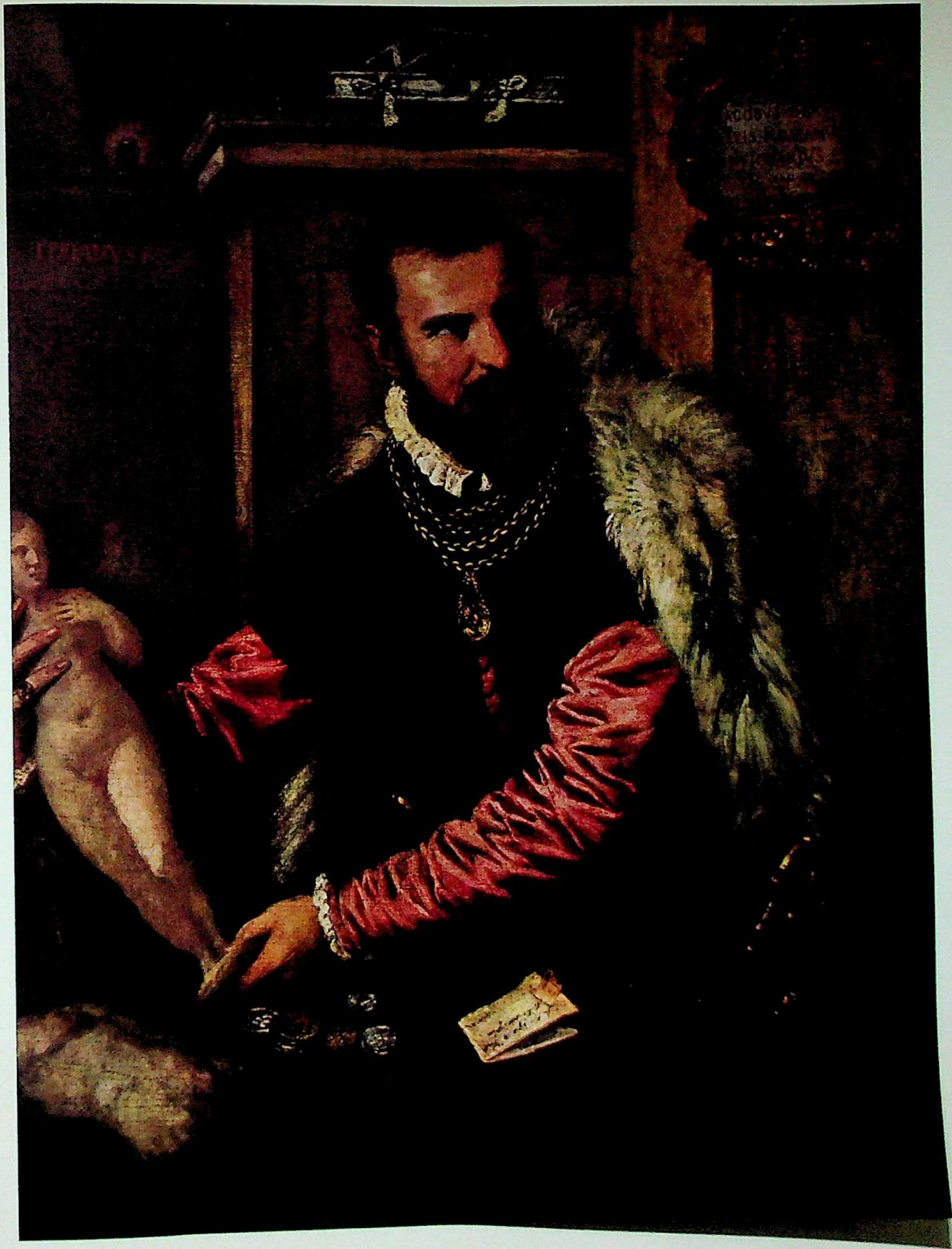


PLATE 58

TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLIO)

Born 1477-89 at Pieve di Cadore, died 1576 at Venice

NYMPH AND SHEPHERD

Canvas, 149.6 × 187 cm. (59 × 73⁵/₈ in.) Inv. No. 1825

Many of the sources make it clear that Titian's contemporaries found his late style hard to understand, even hard to accept. Vasari, who, being a painter himself, presumably had some insight into the nature of art, and who certainly had a remarkable feeling for quality in the art of his times, was an exception. Discussing some late mythological scenes by Titian, he wrote: "It is true that [Titian's] methods in these late works differ widely from those he adopted in his youth. The early works are executed with amazing delicacy and care, so that they can be viewed both from close up and from a distance; but the late ones are handled very coarsely with bold brush-work and with the form rendered as broad patches of colour, so that nothing can be seen from close up, while from a distance they look perfect... And this method shows discernment, and it is beautiful and amazing, because it makes the pictures seem alive and done with great skill, while concealing the hard work." But even Vasari, in another passage, considered that Titian would have done better to lay his brush down earlier, before somewhat tarnishing his reputation with a number of less good works.

It is no wonder, therefore, that until recent times the Vienna "Nymph and Shepherd" has never been understood, and that it has been considered in poor condition, unfinished, or even as "a broad underpainting in cool colours". Today it is generally recognized as one of Titian's last masterpieces, perhaps the most important of the mythologies and *poesie* (his own word) that he painted during the last decade of his life.

The picture is completely autograph, and in it Titian has freed the paint from its weight and physical properties, giving it indescribable richness and transparency. Emerging out of the shadowy darkness of the tree on the left, the colour glows ghostly and expressive, on the figure of the shepherd, in patches of white and smouldering red. It achieves the most delicate luminosity—a truly unearthly sensuousness and beauty—in the figure of the nymph, which only here and there is touched with rose. By starting out from the two heads, which are so close that they almost merge together, and which provide the psychological focus of the picture, one can follow the zig-zag rhythms from the turbulent movement on the left to the gentle flow on the right. The complex action and turning of the bodies both towards and away from the spectator help to bind the figures and landscape very closely together, in a manner that is specially characteristic of Venetian art from Giorgione onwards. Above all, however, it permits the fullest possible comprehension of the forms, as if uniting many views in a single image.

Both theme and form provide direct links with the youthful work of Titian, who in old age repeatedly returned to his early conceptions. The figure of the nymph corresponds almost exactly to an engraving by Giulio Campagnola, which in its turn was taken from a Giorgione composition. There are also connections with the famous "Concert Champêtre" in the Louvre, though whether this is a Giorgione or a Titian is a matter of dispute even today. It almost seems as if the aged artist wanted to paraphrase his early dream of Paradise; but the unreal, silvery light gives the canvas a disturbing grandeur, almost a sense of general apprehension. The bold shepherd of the early period has been replaced by a dark, bending figure; and where once there were great, leafy trees there is now the mutilated silhouette of a cracked, bare stump, like a terrible scream in the sky echoing over the threatened world of beauty. Many attempts have been made to provide a mythological or poetic interpretation of the work, and of these, certain passages from Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* seem best suited to its pastoral, but at the same time serious, character.

The picture is described as an autograph Titian in the English inventory of the Della Nave collection, and likewise in the Vienna inventory of 1659. During the eighteenth century it was cut to adapt it to the decorative scheme of the Stallburg. It was in the Belvedere in 1816, but was later withheld from exhibition until it found a place in the new museum. In 1937 it was restored to its original dimensions.



PLATE 59

TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLIO) (?)

Born 1477-89 at Pieve di Cadore, died 1576 at Venice

THE BRAVO

Canvas, 75 × 67 cm. (29½ × 26⅜ in.) Inv. No. 64

The picture's title—which means “the hired assassin” or “bully”—goes back to the seventeenth century, and according to Ridolfi (*Le meraviglie dell'arte*, 1646), it illustrates part of a story by Valerius Maximus: a young and handsome soldier, treacherously assaulted by a dissolute officer, kills him to defend his honour. With different names the episode occurs in the work of other authors, including Plutarch, but it is certainly a most unusual subject for a picture. Evidently the artist was attracted by the violent contrast between the two characters, and by the dramatic juxtaposing of light and shade, nobility and degradation. All the tension of the situation has been brilliantly compressed into this very limited space containing two half-length figures. Though both are seen from behind, all their movements are contrasted, and this conflict reaches a climax in the wheeling action of the two left arms. Nevertheless, out of these various interrelated elements the artist has created a unified structure, a perfect balance of opposing forces.

There can be no doubt that only an artist of genius, still fairly young, could have devised such a subtle composition. In the seventeenth century Ridolfi and Boschini both ascribed the picture to Giorgione; but, since 1870, intensified research on this artist has given rise to doubts about the attribution. During recent decades, Cariani, Dosso Dossi, and Palma Vecchio have all been proposed as its author, and the Brescian school has also been suggested, as a general classification. Moreover, by grouping together a number of works that had up to then received little attention, a brand-new artist, the “Master of the Self-portraits”, was created, and the Vienna picture duly included in his *œuvre*. None of these suggestions has provided a satisfactory solution to the problem, and the original ascription to Giorgione has never been entirely dropped. Recently, however, Titian's name has been connected with the work. In the house of Zuan Antonio Venier at Venice, in 1528, Marcantonio Michiel saw a picture by Titian representing an attack, which contained two half-length figures. These *could* be the ones in the Vienna painting. Thus, the problem now centres on two names: Giorgione and Titian. Giorgione may be regarded as having invented, at Venice, this new type of picture with half-length figures, and in many other respects the “Bravo” obviously owes something to him. But certain features—particularly the handling of paint—clearly remove it from Giorgione's orbit. Moreover, Titian himself adopted and developed this kind of composition with half-length figures filling the whole picture-space, especially during the second decade of the sixteenth century. His almost contemporary Dresden “Tribute Money” (about 1516-18) provides an excellent object for comparison with the “Bravo”, and the pictures are exactly the same size.

Boschini, writing in 1660, said that Leopold Wilhelm bought the Vienna painting at a high price. However, it reached the Archduke's gallery in Brussels by way of England, where it had arrived as part of the Della Nave collection, oddly attributed to Varotari. The Archduke evidently valued it as highly as Titian's “Violante”, because Teniers gave them equal prominence in his gallery illustrations, and actually reproduced both works on the frontispiece to his *Theatrum pictorium*. Judging by the numerous early copies, the “Bravo” must have enjoyed this reputation right from the start. At Vienna, too, in the Stallburg, the Belvedere, and the new museum, it has always been highly regarded.



PLATE 60

LORENZO LOTTO

Born c. 1480 at Venice, died 1556 at Loreto

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN AGAINST A WHITE CURTAIN

Limewood, 42.3 × 35.8 cm. (16⁵/₈ × 14¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 214

Neither Giorgione, who during the first ten years of the sixteenth century influenced almost every young Venetian painter, nor Titian had an appreciable effect on Lorenzo Lotto. In his early work it would be truer to say that he looked to the old Bellini; but, above all, he admired Antonello da Messina and his imposing San Cassiano altarpiece (1475-76), which was already extremely famous, and of which three fragments are preserved in the Vienna Gallery. Moreover, his work also contains many signs of close, but general, contact with Northern art. To his Venetian contemporaries he must have seemed a brooding eccentric, a religious fanatic, a hypersensitive dreamer, with little sympathy for their hedonistic pantheism, and worldly ways. Somewhat later, Aretino recorded Titian's high praise of Lotto ("... as good as goodness, as virtuous as virtue"), but in reading it one is still aware of the tremendous difference between the two artists. Alone, with nobody he could trust to look after him, and very disturbed in mind (as he himself once wrote), he wandered restlessly between Venice, Treviso, Rome, Recanati, Bergamo, Ancona, and Loreto, often living in religious houses and dreaming there of an ideal human community "in Christ", modelled on the Holy Trinity. His earthly pilgrimage ended at Loreto, where he had become a lay-brother in the Santa Casa.

The Vienna Gallery does full justice to Lotto, both as a portraitist and as a painter of religious subjects. Today, it is his portraits that are most readily appreciated and understood, revealing, as they do, a side of his character that is also one of the great virtues of his art in general: his human sympathy and remarkable psychological insight. Considered together, his sitters form a very unusual group. It could almost be said that Lotto only looked for models who resembled him: idealists and dreamers, people with sensitive, serious, deep, difficult characters, like his own.

The most striking thing about these portraits, however, is the way they make immediate human contact with the onlooker. Thus, the young man with reddish hair in the Vienna picture, dressed in black and posed in front of a white damask curtain, turns his head abruptly towards the spectator, gazing firmly at him with an enquiring look. It is interesting to note that, while actually at work on the canvas, the artist made the black mass of the shoulders and chest smaller, thereby reducing the static solidity of the form in favour of a more lively, and psychologically richer, sense of movement. This rapport with the spectator, foreshadowed by Antonello, is the most personal factor in Lotto's portraits, and it contrasts with the remoteness of Bellini's figures. The only exception seems to be the signed "Young Man before a Green Curtain", also in the Vienna Gallery (Inv. No. 907); but even there the irregular, oblique folds in the curtain introduce a new and individual element into a composition otherwise somewhat influenced by Bellini.

In the present work, too, the slanting undulations of the white damask heighten the restless atmosphere, the momentary quality of the vision. The pale flame visible beyond the curtain on the right must be some kind of a symbol. Perhaps it indicates the brevity of life; or it may contain a personal reference of the kind that Lotto often introduced into his portraits, to which the key has since been lost. The sharp drawing, hard modelling, and harsh colour seem so un-Venetian that, like other early Lottos, this work was formerly ascribed to Jacopo de' Barbari, a Venetian painter who worked in Germany and the Netherlands. Jacopo came closer than any other Venetian to the art of Dürer and the North, and virtually belonged to the German school.

Painted between 1506 and 1510, the portrait first appeared in the Belvedere in 1824. Its provenance and date of acquisition are unknown.

The Vienna Gallery also possesses a Lotto portrait, dating from 1527, of a man standing in front of a strangely lit violet-red curtain (Inv. No. 265). With a familiar, almost importunate, air he leans towards the spectator holding out a gilded paw, which perhaps refers to the subject's name, as in the Palma Vecchio portrait mentioned by Ridolfi (see notes on Plate 56). Another showing a bearded man seen from three sides and belonging to Lotto's second Venetian period, is also very interesting, for it has come to be widely regarded as a self-portrait (Inv. No. 92). Recently, a beautiful portrait of a young woman (Inv. No. 1914) has been ascribed to the artist. It shows strong affinities with the Brescian school and was painted between 1540 and 1550.



PLATE 61

LORENZO LOTTO

Born c. 1480 at Venice, died 1556 at Loreto

SACRA CONVERSAZIONE

Canvas, 113.5 × 152 cm. (144³/₄ × 59⁷/₈ in.) Inv. No. 101

The Vienna Gallery possesses three paintings by Lorenzo Lotto of religious subjects, each from a very different period of his development. "St Dominic Preaching" (Benda bequest, 1932; Inv. No. 6980) formed part of the altarpiece that Lotto painted in 1506-8 for the church of San Domenico at Recanati. It is the only surviving panel from the predella, which Vasari particularly admired for containing, as he put it, "the most charming little figures in the world". The "Christ in Glory with the Symbols of the Passion" (Inv. No. 1845), a work of extremely high quality dating from 1543, was acquired by Leopold Wilhelm. Round about 1527-28, almost midway in time between the two works just mentioned, Lotto painted the great Vienna "Sacra Conversazione". It belongs to the end of his prosperous, fruitful Bergamo period, when he was aged almost fifty. In his *Carta del navigar pittoresco* (Venice, 1660), Boschini describes how the Virgin, the infant Christ, and St Catherine are "joined in humble harmony", and briefly explains the meaning of the term *sacra conversazione*. This is the name given to a unified representation of the Madonna and Child with saints, in which the participants are aware of each other, or linked by some common action. Giovanni Bellini and Antonello, who gripped their strictly symmetrical groups of figures in a solid architectural framework, perfected one type of *sacra conversazione* at Venice during the last decades of the fifteenth century. Early in the sixteenth century, however, the arrangement became freer, and the action often took place out of doors. Sitting or kneeling close together, the figures suggest a more warmly human and intimate relationship, particularly in works intended for private devotion. It is quite true that Palma Vecchio preceded Lotto in this field, but—despite Boschini's assertion to the contrary—Lotto was far from being a mere imitator of his exact contemporary. Possessing a less versatile and receptive talent, Palma was more firmly anchored to the culture of Venice and Bergamo than the eternal wanderer Lotto, who always reacted quickly to a new stimulus, but who transformed each observation into something entirely personal, so that its source became unimportant.

Much can be learned about Lotto's art by comparing his Vienna "Sacra Conversazione" with Palma's version of the subject in the same gallery. Palma's rendering is the earlier of the two and one of his outstanding works. Whereas he has kept to the old idea of raising the seat of the Madonna almost like a throne, Lotto's Virgin sits comfortably on the ground, amid the waves and ripples of her ample, celestial blue dress. The tree that Palma placed behind his Madonna has been transformed by Lotto into a powerful trunk extending its branches in a protective gesture over the Mother and her Child. One can also usefully contrast Palma's almost uniform lighting with Lotto's subtle variations of light and shade; and Palma's arrangement of saints around the Madonna with Lotto's far more subtle, fluid disposition of figures. Memorable, too, in Lotto's picture is the skipping, almost floating, movement of the angel holding out the garland over the head of the youthful Virgin; the dreamy look and worldly elegance of St Catherine, a princess clad in green-gold and red; and the sturdy, virile, bearded figure of the shepherd or pilgrim saint (St James the Greater?), whose ardent eye pierces the deep shadow on his face. He brings a harsh, vigorous tang of nature down from the mountains into this otherwise almost over-refined and elegant group, in which the individual figures are ingeniously linked together by their gestures. This effect of unity is enhanced by the colour. From left to right, it becomes gradually more earthy, starting with the ethereal, shimmering robe of the angel and ending in the grey, and fiery red of the pilgrim's garment. Then there is the broad, gentle landscape, and, last of all, the truly magical play of light and shadow, which seems capricious but is in fact profoundly related to the action. All Lotto's art and skill have gone into the creation of this unified and richly rhythmical composition; and whatever the initial contribution of Palma and Correggio, of the Brescian, Lombardic and Florentine schools, the final result is purest Lotto.

Though the picture was acquired by Leopold Wilhelm, it is not referred to in the 1659 inventory. However, Boschini (1660) mentioned it as being in the Imperial collection at Vienna, and it appears in Storffer's painted "inventory" of 1730. Since that date it has never left the gallery.



PLATE 62

DOSSO DOSSI (GIOVANNI DE' LUTERI)

Born c. 1489-90 at Trento (or at Dosso near Mantua), died 1542 at Ferrara

JUPITER, MERCURY, AND VIRTUE

Canvas, 111.3 × 150 cm. (43⁷/₈ × 59 in.) Inv. No. 9110

In his annotations to the third edition of Francesco Sansovino's *Venezia descritta* (1663), Don Martinioni wrote that the collection of Count Widmann at Venice included a picture by Dosso Dossi of Jupiter painting butterflies, with Virtue requesting an audience but being refused by Mercury. The editor added that the story was by Lucian. Three years earlier, Marco Boschini had recorded the presence of a similar work—evidently a copy—in another Venetian collection, and it too, according to Boschini, was based on an idea of Lucian's. These two references have made it possible to identify the story, which is not by the famous Greek author, but the work of an Italian humanist who used the name Lucian as a pseudonym. It takes the form of a conversation between Mercury and Virtue, who complains bitterly about the wrong done to her by her enemy Fortune. Abandoned on earth, she wants to appeal to Jupiter, but waits in vain for an audience. The other gods whom she begs to intervene on her behalf are also busy with their own affairs: one has to see that the pumpkin plants bloom at the right time; another must make sure that the wings of the butterflies are beautifully painted. In the end, as even Jupiter is dependent on Fortune and helpless against her power, Mercury advises Virtue to go into hiding and wait for her persecutor's hatred to subside.

This brief narrative—even just the bit about the butterflies—was enough to fire Lotto's imagination. On a cloud bank Jupiter himself has set up his panel or canvas, which is prepared with a white ground, and leaned it against a rainbow in the stormy, steel-blue sky. With his bundle of lightning at his feet, he sits cross-legged, holding his brushes, his mahlstick, and his palette, and wearing a magnificent, but practical, informal robe. He is completely absorbed in his work, as though it were some pleasant, weekend occupation. On the other side of the picture Virtue is stepping up to the platform of clouds, one hand on her breast and pointing with the other towards earth. In the middle one sees Mercury, a most unclassical figure with its soft, richly plastic modelling and its own peculiar colouristic charm. The messenger of the gods has raised a finger to his lips as a sign to Virtue that she must keep silent and not disturb Jupiter in his important work.

The outstanding thing about the composition is the way in which the similar, yet so subtly varied, poses of the two gods have been related to that of the female figure, thus bringing the opposing forces in the picture into harmony. Jupiter's crossed right leg; Mercury's turning movement; the parallel inclination of their two bodies; and above all the length of red material that, passing under Mercury, darts out towards the right—these are the chief elements in this masterpiece of balance. Considered from the point of view of its colour, the work is brought to life by the contrast between the "divine" reddish hues (orange, carmine, and cinnabar) and the "earthly" harmony of brown, yellow, and green. On the Mercury figure, of which the cool, whitish flesh tones provide the canvas with its centre of luminosity, appear the picture's deepest and most intense red, and its darkest, most profound green.

The "Jupiter, Mercury, and Virtue" is an early work. It may have been painted for Alfonso d'Este between 1516 and 1518 while Titian was also working in Ferrara for the Duke, who employed both Dosso and his brother Battista at his court. Recorded during the seventeenth century as being in Venice, it did not reach Vienna until two centuries later, when Daniel Penther, the Director of the gallery attached to the Vienna Academy of Arts, bought it for his own collection. After the Penther collection was put up for auction in 1880, it became the property of Count Lanckoroński. In 1951 it was presented by Dr Anton Lanckoroński to the Vienna Gallery, which already possessed a "St Jerome", dating from about 1512, by Dosso (Inv. No. 263). This picture, acquired by Leopold Wilhelm, is Lotto's only known signed work: at the bottom he has added a monogram formed by a D and a bone (*dosso* in Italian). The background justified the artist's high reputation among his contemporaries as a landscape painter.

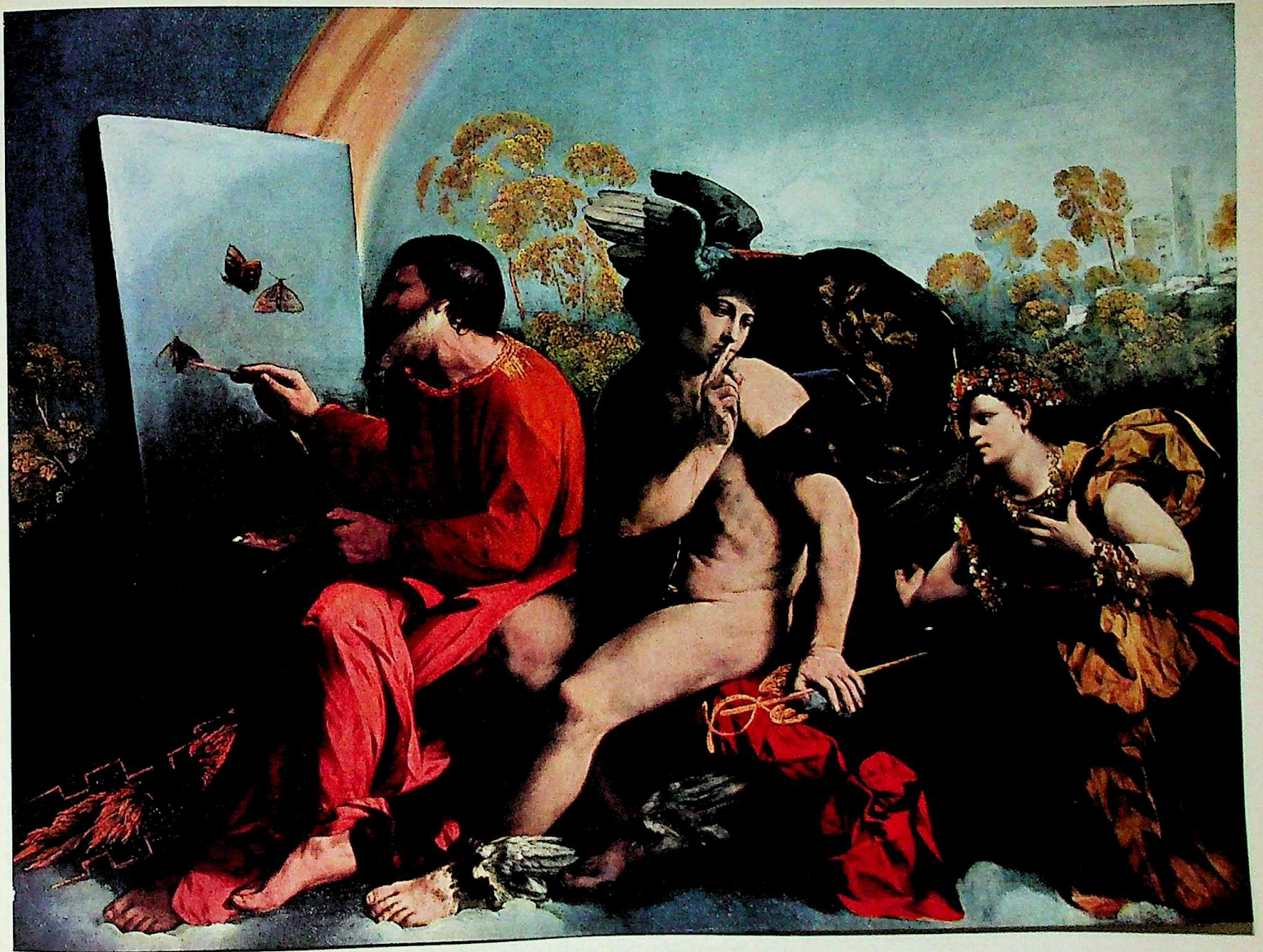


PLATE 63

PARIS BORDONE (PARIS PASCHALINUS)

Born 1500 at Treviso, died 1571 at Venice

ALLEGORY

Canvas, 111.5 × 174.5 cm. (43⁷/₈ × 68³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 120

Like several other artists associated with the Venetian school, or actually belonging to it, though not by birth, Paris Bordone developed a highly personal style. He came to Venice very early in life and received a thorough training there. To begin with, he kept perhaps rather closer to the great artists of the older generation—Giorgione, Palma Vecchio, and, above all, Titian—than did his most gifted contemporaries. In Titian he found first a teacher, then his most bitter rival, and this disagreeable experience certainly influenced his artistic development. According to Vasari, who was obviously well informed, Bordone left Venice to avoid such unpleasant competition, and worked instead at Trevisa, Cremona, Belluno, Milan, Genoa, and, apparently in 1538, even for Francis I in France. He also went to Augsburg on the occasion of the Imperial Diet there, which attracted so many other artists—including Titian.

The Vienna Gallery possesses six pictures by Bordone, all of which seem to have been in Leopold Wilhelm's collection. Two of them represent mythological or allegorical subjects, and obviously they must both have belonged to a single decorative scheme, similar to those of the famous *studioli* (little studies) at Ferrara and Mantua. A canvas showing Diana and her nymphs, now at Dresden, is almost exactly as big as the Vienna works, and it probably belongs to the same series. Whereas the Dresden picture and the Vienna "Venus, Mars, and Cupid" (Inv. No. 69) present no serious iconographical problems, the meaning of the other Vienna painting—here reproduced—is not entirely plain. At its face value, however, the composition seems clear enough. It is based on the contrast between the soft, rounded, flowing forms and clear, light colours of the young woman on the one hand; and the dark, sharp, hard, cold, glittering surfaces of the knight on the other. All these opposites find their point of contact and means of communication in the crossing of the two right arms. The young woman is picking a fruit from a tree in which Cupid's quiver hangs, while Cupid himself pours roses out of a basket into her lap. On the left, a female guardian spirit is crowning the couple with myrtle wreaths. By means of its strongly oblique thrust into the picture, this winged figure starts an attractive rhythm undulating across the composition, until it is brought to a close by Cupid's contrary movement inwards from the right.

As the male figure looks like a portrait, it used to be thought that the purchaser of the work must have wanted a permanent record of himself with the woman he loved in the form of an allegory, of which the meaning has since been lost. However, Bordone repeatedly used exactly the same female type; for Venus in the other Vienna picture mentioned above, and for the Dresden Diana, as well as in many other "portraits", which evidently are not really portraits at all. Moreover, the knight itself is also a standard Bordone figure, and cannot therefore be regarded as the likeness of a particular human being. So presumably this picture, like its two companions, represents some erotic subject from a myth or a legend.

Though disturbing at first, the way in which strong realism with a rough, rustic flavour has been combined with highly artificial idealization is perhaps the chief attraction of Bordone's truly "Mannerist" art which shows signs of very varied influences. It contains clear traces of Giorgione and obvious debts—especially in the male heads—to Titian, as well as indisputable signs of Northern art: that of France in particular, it would seem.

The Vienna "Allegory" is almost universally dated at about 1550. It may have been painted at Augsburg, where, according to Vasari, Bordone was very active, and included the Fugger family among his clients. For as early as 1643 the two associated Vienna works were recorded as being there in the Steiner residence, from whence they probably both entered Leopold Wilhelm's collection. However, only the canvas reproduced here is listed in the 1659 inventory. Seized by the French in 1809, it was returned to Vienna in 1815, after the war.



PLATE 64

MORETTO DA BRESCIA (ALESSANDRO BONVICINO)

*Born c. 1498 at Brescia, died there 1554**ST JUSTINA OF ANTIOCH*Poplar, 200 × 139 cm. (78³/₄ × 54³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 61

According to legend, a sorcerer called Cyprian attempted by means of his black magic to seduce St Justina of Antioch, who had dedicated herself to the service of the Church. Twice he sent demons to her, and finally Satan himself; but when he saw that all his evil arts were of no avail against the maiden's constancy and the sign of the cross, he too was converted to Christianity. Later, Cyprian and Justina suffered martyrdom together.

On the left of Moretto's picture, a unicorn kneels with bowed head in front of a charming view of the Alpine foothills. A symbol of virginity and here an attribute of St Justina, the creature is expressing its devotion to the noble woman, who, in gorgeously coloured garments worthy of a princess, dominates the whole composition. Behind her and slightly to her left there kneels a youngish, bearded man, wearing black. With his hands joined in prayer, he looks up at her in adoration, and everything about him suggests that the figure is a portrait of the donor of the work. On the other hand, the fact that the saint has been treated just as realistically raises the question of whether the man may not represent St Cyprian after his conversion. The relationship between knightly devotion and the noble condescension that stems from great womanly dignity fits this interpretation equally well. In reality, there is no essential conflict between these two different readings, for the idea of saint and donor and that of saint and neophyte are very similar. Both explanations may even be regarded as equally valid. At all events, the closeness of the figures to each other and the human bond between them express a very pure, fruitful sense of piety, new in an altarpiece.

Nevertheless, Moretto's panel, dating from about 1530, has a parallel—or, to be more accurate, a prototype. At Basle round about 1525 (i.e. shortly before he went to live permanently in England), Hans Holbein the Younger painted his famous altarpiece with the "Madonna of Mercy and the Burgomaster Meyer Family". In it one finds the same intimate, human relationship between the donor and the object of his veneration. The similarity of basic conception and certain resemblances between the costumes of the principal figures are too striking for this to be merely a case of analogous but independent discoveries made at almost the same time. On the other hand, one cannot overlook the influence of Raphael on Moretto's work, an influence which largely accounts for the statuesque majesty of the saint, the freedom of her movement, the sense of balance in the composition as a whole, and even—considering that the creature is there as an attribute—the unusual size of the unicorn. At the period when he was painting the "St Justina", Moretto would have been able to obtain ideas and inspiration from a picture by Raphael of St Margaret with a huge dragon, which according to Marcantonio Michiel (who also made the attribution) was in the house of Zuan Antonio Venier at Venice in 1528, and which may be the one of identical subject now in the Vienna Gallery (Inv. No. 171).

Moretto was the leading Brescian painter during the first half of the sixteenth century. Particularly satisfying in his "St Justina" are the fresh mountain landscape; the artist's feeling for reality; his skilful rendering of broad daylight; a certain variety and brightness in the colouring, which is quite distinct from the more subdued Venetian palette; and the way rich "chromatic" effects have been obtained even from pure black and white. The donor portrait points the way for the art of Giovanni Battista Moroni, who was the most important portraitist among Moretto's pupils.

Very likely, the panels belonged to Archduke Leopold of the Tyrol, who kept in active contact with Italy through his wife, Claudia de Médicis. Even more probably, however, its owner was Leopold's successor Ferdinand Karl, whose wife Anna was also a Medici, and who acquired Raphael's "Madonna in the Meadow" (see Plate 70) for his residence at Innsbruck. The "St Justina" was first mentioned in 1663, when Archduke Sigmund Franz, the last prince of the Tyrol, transferred it, along with 340 other pictures, from the palace at Innsbruck to Schloss Ambras. In the inventory of these paintings the present work is described as an allegory of maidenhood and attributed to Titian. Shortly after this it must have been brought to Vienna, as it is shown in Storffer's painted "inventory" of the Stallburg gallery—this time as a Bordenone. It was correctly ascribed to Moretto in 1832.



PLATE 65

JACOPO BASSANO (JACOPO DA PONTE)

Born c. 1510 (?) at Bassano, died there 1592

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS

Canvas, 94 × 117.5 cm. (37 × 46¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 361

The story goes that among the musicians in his "Marriage at Cana" Paolo Veronese represented Titian on double-bass, Tintoretto on violin, Paolo himself on viola da gamba, and Jacopo Bassano on a sort of flute—the shepherd's instrument. This interpretation seems to have first gained currency in the nineteenth century, and it will not stand up to close critical scrutiny. As far as Bassano is concerned, however, it still has some interest as an allusion to the rustic atmosphere that is a well-known feature of his art. Except for a period in Venice when he was barely twenty and occasional shorter visits to the city later on, the artist spent his whole life at Bassano, in the shadow of the mountains. His house stood near the bridge (*ponte* in Italian) over the Brenta, which explains his family name "da Ponte". Many of his pictures, on which, as time went by, other members of his family came to be active collaborators, can only be fully understood when considered in relation to these surroundings. No city-dwelling Venetian knew so much about animals and the countryside, nor would he have been able to depict the life of the shepherds and the broad landscape of the mountains with such freshness. Yet Bassano's work clearly shows that, even tucked away in his remote country-town, he kept a very close eye on the latest events in the world of art. Not only was he well informed about all new developments, but he even made his own notable contribution to them. It is hard to think of any Venetian artist who understood the meaning and expressive possibilities of Mannerism so profoundly and at such an early date as Bassano.

Among the painter's many versions of the subject, the Vienna "Adoration of the Kings" is particularly striking. It is a magnificent work, perhaps even the most important item in the Vienna Gallery's huge Bassano collection, which includes about eighty pictures. Until quite recently, people took exception to works like the "Adoration" because of their alleged "bad drawing". Only since the advent of Expressionism and the resulting extension of public taste have they again come to receive serious attention. Today the "Adoration" speaks directly to the spectator, for the old barrier of prejudice has gone and no longer prevents him from appreciating these elongated, hypersensitive figures, with their weightless movement, which foreshadow the art of El Greco; the strange, abstract, incorporeal patches of colour; and the entirely intellectual approach to composition.

Except for a few details, three-dimensional space is not important in the picture. The act of adoration, involving the holy family and the old, kneeling king, has been firmly confined to the lower left half of the picture within a triangle, which forms part of the surface pattern. A diagonal "caesura" crossing the composition from top left to bottom right isolates this group from the one representing the arrival of the kings. Whereas Bassano has built up the adoration group out of oblique lines that meet and intersect at right angles, the restless activity in the other half of the picture is expressed by means of disc-like forms and circular rhythms. The pattern traced by the two younger kings—their movements and the oblique line of the Moor's body—recall the basic structure of the adoration group, thereby ingeniously linking the two triangular halves of the composition. Bearing in mind all the strong movement in the picture and the differences between its two basic divisions, it seems hardly possible that Bassano could still have developed the composition along strictly symmetrical lines. Nevertheless, to left and right of the central green mass of the old king's robe, isolated patches of red, blue, and silver are balanced against each other; while the head of the donkey in the bottom left-hand corner corresponds to the dog opposite it on the right. By methods such as these the artist was able to construct a solid frame-work for his picture.

Today, the "Adoration of the Kings" is generally placed round about 1562, which means that Bassano painted it at the beginning of the second phase of his development. He was then approaching fifty and at the height of his creative powers. At the same date, the thirty-four-year-old Veronese was working on his "Marriage at Cana", and round about then Tintoretto, who was probably a bit younger than Bassano, produced his "Susanna and the Elders". From neither of them could Bassano at that time have obtained his crucial new pictorial ideas.

Like so many others in the Vienna Gallery, this work was acquired by Leopold Wilhelm, and seems to have come from England as part of the Della Nave collection. It is listed in the 1659 inventory as an original by "the young Bassano".

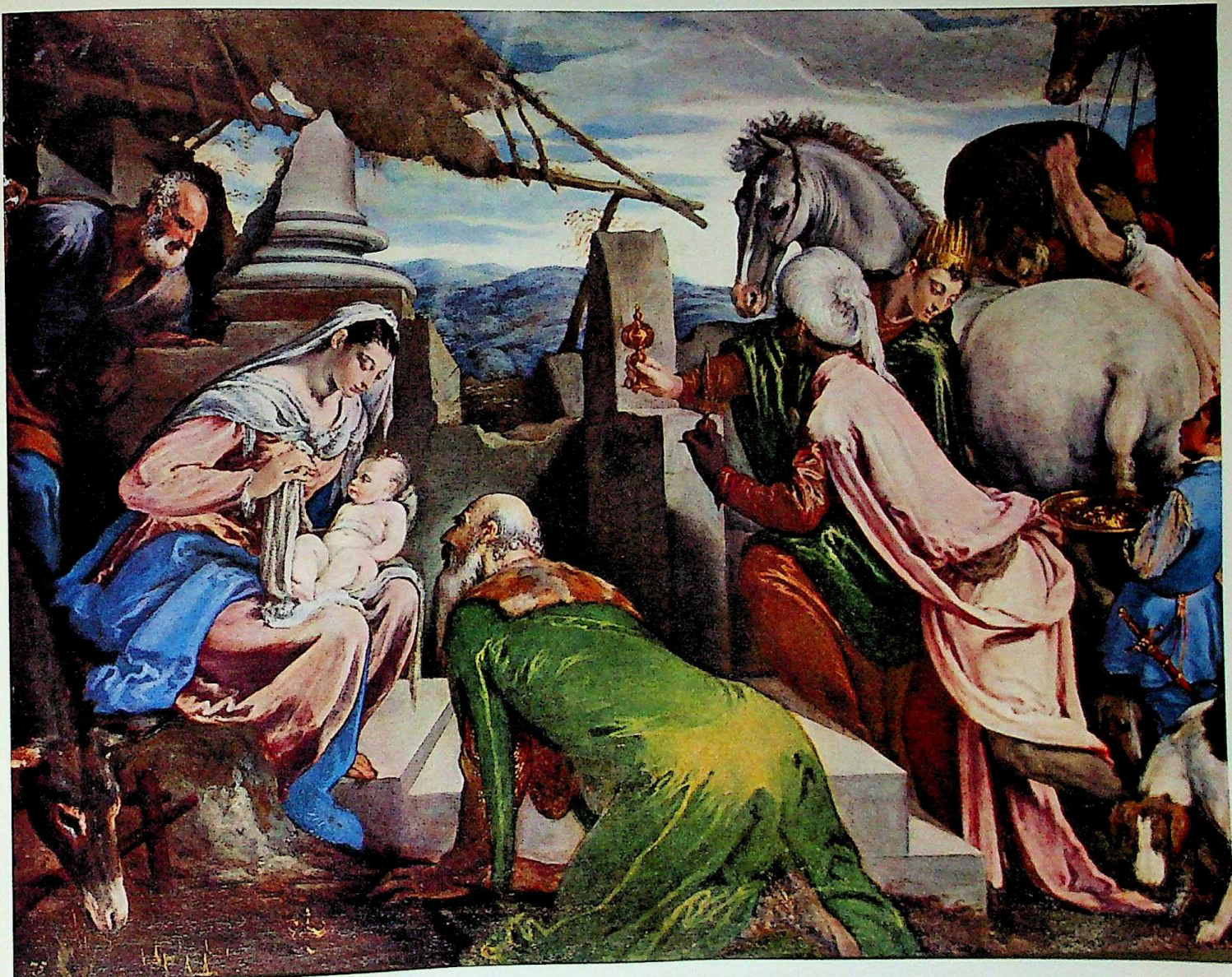


PLATE 66

TINTORETTO (JACOPO ROBUSTI)

*Born 1518 at Venice, died there 1594**PORTRAIT OF A MAN IN ARMOUR ADORNED WITH GOLD*Canvas, 116 × 98 cm. ($45\frac{5}{8} \times 38\frac{5}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 24

Among Tintoretto's early portraits, two in the Vienna Gallery deserve special attention: the "Lorenzo Soranzo" of 1553 (Inv. No. 308), and the one reproduced here, which represents a naval officer in armour decorated with gold. In the strange, hovering rhythm and the strongly lyrical—one might almost say deeply melancholy—mood of the "Lorenzo Soranzo" there is an echo of the solitary, remote quality of portraits produced under Giorgione's influence very early in the sixteenth century.

Closely related to the one just characterized, but with a somewhat different tonal emphasis, the second Vienna portrait is distinguished by its very restrained, serene nobility. The rather small head of the naval officer has been placed close to the upper edge of the canvas. Between the black hair and reddish beard his almost shadowless face—brightly coloured and precisely drawn—turns towards the spectator with just a hint of superiority. To the artist, however, the man's armour seemed at least as important as his head. The strikingly elegant and simple shape of the cuirass, the delicate but energetic curve of the waist-line, and the precise definition of all the main forms are typical of the period round about 1540. Tintoretto was obviously delighted with their beauty. He enjoyed the linear rhythms of the variously curved profiles, the remarkable plasticity of the volumes, but, above all else, the mirror-like effect of the metallic surfaces and the picturesque combination of dark steel and glittering gold. Moreover, the armour also provides the basic lines of the composition. Starting at the helmet in the bottom left-hand corner, the eye moves to the hand that rests on the helmet, and travels along an oblique, interrupted course up the right arm to the face. From there it proceeds downwards by a rather steep, devious route until, feasting on the details of the hilt, sword-belt, buckles, and gauntlet, it comes to rest. The structure of the figure gains support from the background, and in particular from the three columns on the right, despite their own lack of spacial clarity. That Tintoretto was not, in fact, aiming at a convincing effect of depth becomes obvious when one considers the window. Instead of marking the limits of a coherent extension of the interior space, the window opening forms, as it were, the frame of a symbolic picture within the picture, and an element in the surface pattern. Furthermore, the unnaturalistic colouring of the view contributes strongly to the atmosphere of the portrait.

Although the brief inscription on the plinth in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture gives the man's age as thirty, his name is unknown. The luxurious armour, with its gold decoration, makes it clear that he must have belonged to one of the great patrician families who took it in turns to rule Venice. Most critics date the work to the period of the artist's maturity, round about 1560. Unfortunately, this does not tally with the style of the armour, and so, to get round this difficulty, it has been suggested that the man had put on a suit made for someone else. There really are some examples of this in portraiture, including Van Dyck's picture of a young Mantuan prince, who is also wearing gold-decorated armour (see Plate 92). This work was, in fact, quite obviously modelled on the Tintoretto, but the prince's armour was over fifty years old when Van Dyck depicted it, and therefore counted as a valuable antique. The naval officer's attire, on the other hand, was merely out of date, and it is hard to imagine why a Venetian aristocrat should have wished to be portrayed wearing it. However, the problem can be easily solved by accepting a rather earlier date for the work. Bearing in mind the age of the subject (thirty), the date of the armour (c. 1540), and the fact that young noblemen usually obtained their suit of armour between the age of eighteen and twenty, the picture, under ordinary circumstances, could not have been painted much later than 1550. In any case, there are numerous reasons for preferring a date close to that of the "Lorenzo Soranzo".

The portrait discussed here came to Vienna as part of Leopold Wilhelm's collection, and it is already listed as an autograph Tintoretto in the 1659 inventory.

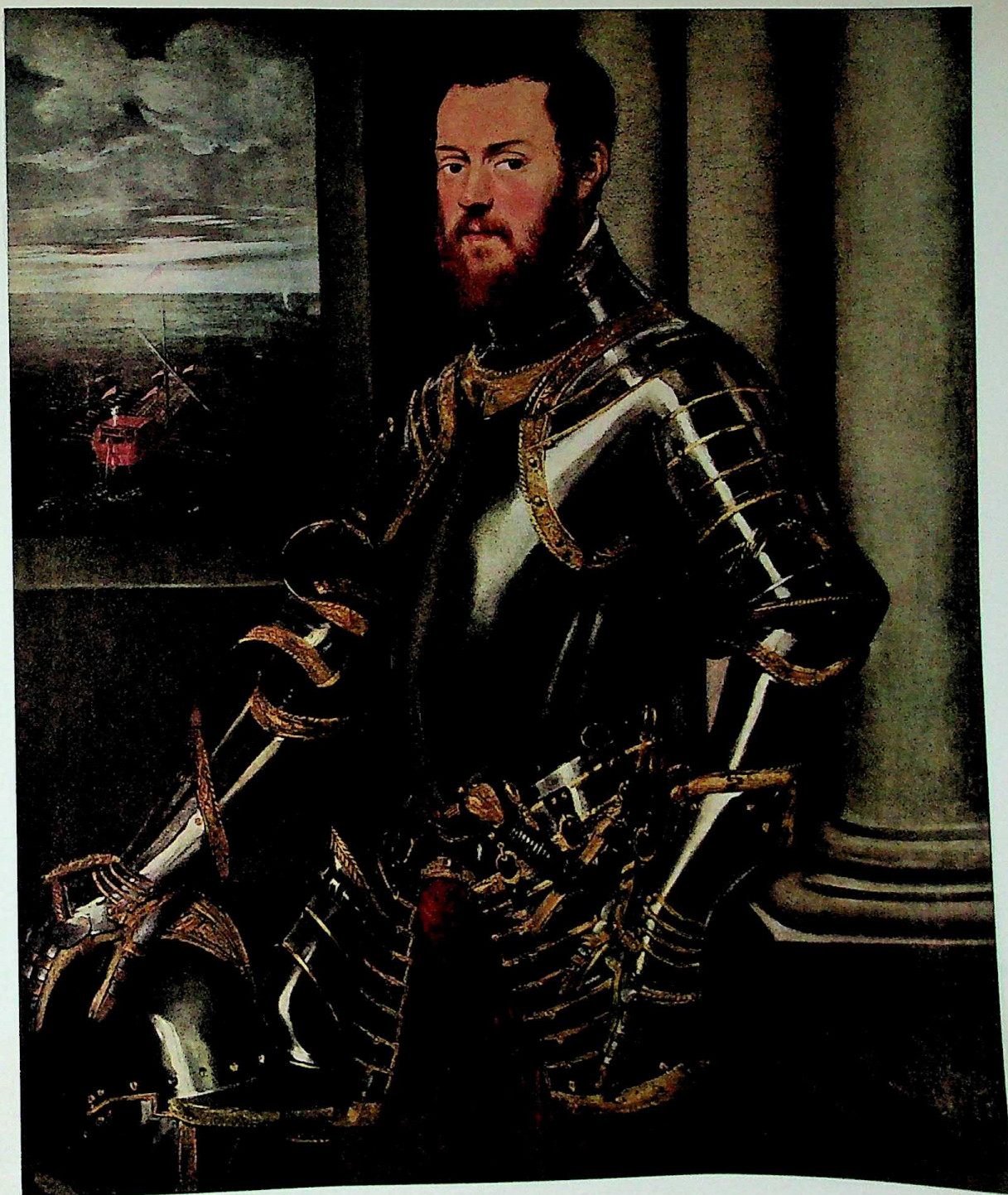


PLATE 67

TINTORETTO (JACOPO ROBUSTI)

Born 1518 at Venice, died there 1594

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

Canvas, 146.6 × 193.6 cm. (57⁵/₈ × 76¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 1530

Tintoretto's "Susanna and the Elders" is outstanding simply as a piece of painting. In particular, the almost life-size female figure is one of the most magnificent of the artist's nudes, perhaps even the most beautiful and radiant of all. The gradations of the modelling and flesh tints are so delicate and fine that they defy description; and, in a sense, the shadows are simply another form of light. Susanna's golden hair, gathered up in a mass of little plaits, looks like a wreath of corn around her head. In some places the contours of her body appear soft and vague; in others, hard and precise. In one passage they may be clearly defined by reflected light, while in another they swell out into a gentle, shaded curve. Everywhere, however, they possess the sensitivity that one finds in Tintoretto's drawings. Behind the figure, the plump, round tree-trunks, the fat magpie on the branch, and the huge, white head of elder flowers all strengthen the sensual impact of this ample and luminous incarnation of sunlight and beauty. The landscape, too, with its aura of a joyful paradise and resplendent in the varied play of light and shadow, is a source of both happiness and sensuous delight.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this ravishing beauty, it is as an interpretation in paint of a passage from the Bible that the picture is a work of art in the fullest possible sense of the term. In the Apocryphal version of the Book of Daniel, the story of Susanna has the structure of a classical drama. The first verses name the scene of action—Babylon—and introduce the principal actors: Susanna (i.e. "The Lily"), who was the wife of Joacim and "a very fair woman, and one that feared the Lord"; two ancients (or elders), who had been appointed judges for that year; and Joacim's garden, next to his house, which the ancients used as a place where they could settle people's law suits. This garden really is more than just a setting; it has its own positive rôle in the play. Every day the two elders saw Susanna going into the garden, "so that their lust was inflamed towards her". There came a time when "...there was nobody there save the two elders, that had hid themselves, and watched her. Then she said to her maids, 'Bring me oil and washing balls, and shut the garden doors, that I may wash me.' And they did as she bade them, and shut the garden doors, and went out themselves at privy doors to fetch the things that she had commanded them: but they saw not the elders, because they were hid." It was this tense and critical moment of the action that Tintoretto chose as the subject of his picture.

Susanna, under the mistaken impression that she is alone in her wealthy husband's huge garden, has sat down on the edge of the pool. Screened by the dark rose-hedge, she is fully intent on her bath and on the contemplation of her own beauty. In the meantime, however, the two elders have taken up their positions. One peers round the near end of the rose-hedge, like a beast stalking its prey; and behind him, in the background, one can see a sort of game preserve with a stag and a hind standing at the water's edge: the allusion is unmistakable. Farther away still, the silhouette of Venice is just visible, glittering in the sunlight. The other ancient, seen as a small upright figure, is standing at the far end of the dark, leafy screen, which, by means of its abrupt foreshortening, links the two evil-doers together. In the centre of the background, the vista through the pergola, past the open gateway, and into the distant, park-like landscape beyond, makes the position of Susanna—who is cut off in the foreground with no apparent way of escape—seem even more desperate; yet she is still unaware of her fate. One might go so far as to say that the whole composition has been calculated to stress this powerful effect of recession, which, by separating the good from the evil forces, heightens the tension of the situation.

Both technically and as a conception, the "Susanna" is one of Tintoretto's most remarkable achievements, and, because of its unusual qualities, critics have hesitated between various dates within the period 1550–70. However, a really close and thorough analysis makes it fairly plain that the work was produced during the sixties. Carlo Ridolfi only mentioned it in the second edition of *Le meraviglie dell'arte* (1646), stating that it belonged to the Venetian painter Nicolò Renier. Renier was also a collector and dealer, through whose hands passed a succession of outstanding works of art, several of which have ended up in the Vienna Gallery. Nevertheless, the "Susanna" was not recorded there until 1824, and does not even seem to have been on show in the Belvedere during the decades immediately following this reference.



PLATE 68

TINTORETTO (JACOPO ROBUSTI)

*Born 1518 at Venice, died there 1594**ST NICHOLAS OF BARI*Canvas, 114 × 56 cm. (44⁷/₈ × 22 in.) Inv. No. 1544

The rather unusual, narrow shape of this picture suggests that it originally occupied one compartment of a large altarpiece. This would also explain the vigorous movement of the saint and the direction of his gaze—both as though towards the central compartment of a polyptych. On the paint-surface there are marks indicating that at some period the rectangular top of the canvas was hidden by an arched frame, although the present condition of the work makes it improbable that it was like this in its original state. In particular, the left edge of the canvas has been folded round the stretcher, and the canvas has obviously been cut along this side, too. One cannot tell what is missing; but a single glance at the picture—even in its present fragmentary state—is enough to satisfy one that it is still a fascinating work of art, with all the merits and stylistic features of a very late Tintoretto.

With a sudden turn of the head, the saint positively bounds into the picture-space. His left hand holds back his cope, which falls in flattish, almost vertical folds and makes the figure more compact. On the other side, however, the edge of the cope curves and bellies in highly agitated rhythms as it follows the diagonal line of the crozier. In the middle of the composition the left hand supports a book on which rest the three golden balls that, according to the legend, St Nicholas threw into the house of an impoverished nobleman as a dowry for his three daughters. Some way out to sea, the ship that the saint rescued is in distress; and, like the waves and the sky, the saint himself seems to be in the grip of the hurricane. The streaks of white, grey, and pale yellow of his finely pleated alb are effectively framed by the unusual red of the cope and the golden-yellow of its embroidered border. All these colours combine to form an impressive harmony against the dense, dark, stormy green and blue of the background. Over and over again, one's eye is brought back to the intense white and weird form of the mitre, to the bearded head of the saint, seen in *profil perdu*, and to his sinewy neck. About his head the tempest rages, but a beam of light falls on the swelling sails of the ship, like a blessing from heaven. Tintoretto's execution reveals all the fascination of free, highly personal handling and masterly brushwork. For the most part, the work has been painted in a single application, *alla prima*, and in several passages, such as the lining of the cope, the herring-bone pattern of the canvas has been used to heighten the effect of physical and textural reality.

The "St Nicholas of Bari" was first mentioned in the 1659 inventory, where it is listed as an autograph Tintoretto, and it has been on exhibition ever since. Doubts raised at the turn of the last century about the attribution of the work to Tintoretto were soon set at rest by its high quality, which itself has never been in dispute.



PLATE 69

PAOLO VERONESE (PAOLO CALIARI)

Born 1528 at Verona, died 1588 at Venice

LUCRETIA

Canvas, 109 × 90.5 cm. ($42\frac{7}{8} \times 35\frac{5}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 1561

Like Titian and Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese has a large room to himself in the new arrangement of the Vienna Gallery. It contains seventeen originals, of which those dating from his late period are specially notable. Outstanding among these late works is the precious "Lucretia" which forms a perfect companion piece to the Vienna "Judith" of about ten years earlier. Veronese's art has always been prized for the magic of its colour, but Cézanne, who felt and saw things in a similar way, was probably the first to understand the painter's intentions. Full of admiration, he paid repeated visits to the Louvre in order to study the great Venetian's masterpieces there. He considered that Veronese's expressive power lay entirely in the gradation and refinement of his colouring, and that, for him, colour was the excitant element in art, to which he devoted the most personal part of his being. In fact Cézanne was aware of the abstract quality of Veronese's colouring. He saw the Venetian's use of colour as anticipating his own methods, which consisted in realizing the image through clearly defined patches of colour, of various shapes and sizes, rhythmically juxtaposed. Like musical compositions, Veronese's works are built up out of very carefully pondered chord sequences, and for no other artist is this comparison with music so apt. Even in his largest canvases, the famous banquet scenes, the compositions have been calculated down to the last detail, so that much intensive study is required if one is really going to understand and appreciate them. Indeed, one would have to memorize the structure of these huge pictures, in order to master once and for all the richness of the counterpoint and orchestration. It is easier to grasp the artist's intentions in smaller works with less elaborate subjects, like the "Lucretia".

Bright sunlight streams down on to the head and shoulders of this wonderful figure. Caught in a miraculous radiance, Lucretia's gold-touched flesh and golden, silky, jewelled hair glow against the nocturnal darkness of the background. Transparent shadows and the soft caress of light upon her face and plump shoulders recall Tintoretto's "Susanna"; and yet the very splendour of the light makes one all the more acutely aware of the signs of imminent death. The yellow-green of the drapery that overlaps the white—with delicate blue-green shadows—of the chemise is more intense than the gold of the hair. Strongest of all, however, is the deep, full, luscious green of the mantle, which, with the force and resonance of a bass, dominates all the lower part of the canvas. In violent contrast, but still in harmony with the collective impact of this subtle gradation of colour values, the icy blue-green striped with silver of the fringed shawl somehow suggests, in its chromatic isolation, the tragic end of Lucretia's story. Above it, almost *from* it, rise the leaves and flowers of the curtain, an incredible piece of decoration in which the green and lilac seem to express Lucretia's melancholy and grief.

One of Veronese's contemporaries, the writer on art Francesco Sansovino, paid tribute to his gentle ways. Sixty years after the artist's death, Ridolfi wrote that he had been very straightforward in his dealings with other people, never performing favours in order to obtain work, or degrading himself with shady transactions; he had always kept his promise and had been praised for everything he did; and it had been his custom to wear expensive clothes and velvet shoes. Even if nothing were known about Veronese himself, his works would be enough to show that he was a man to whom order and harmony were supremely important, in that they formed the very basis of his life and art. Moreover, it was Veronese who, when called before the tribunal of the Inquisition because of some profane passages in one of his pictures, justified them by openly affirming for the first time the modern principle that artists should be free to paint as they please.

Like all the other works by Veronese now in the Vienna Gallery, the "Lucretia" formed part of Leopold Wilhelm's collection. It is mentioned in the 1659 inventory, with the remark that it was believed to be an original by "Paulo Vironese".

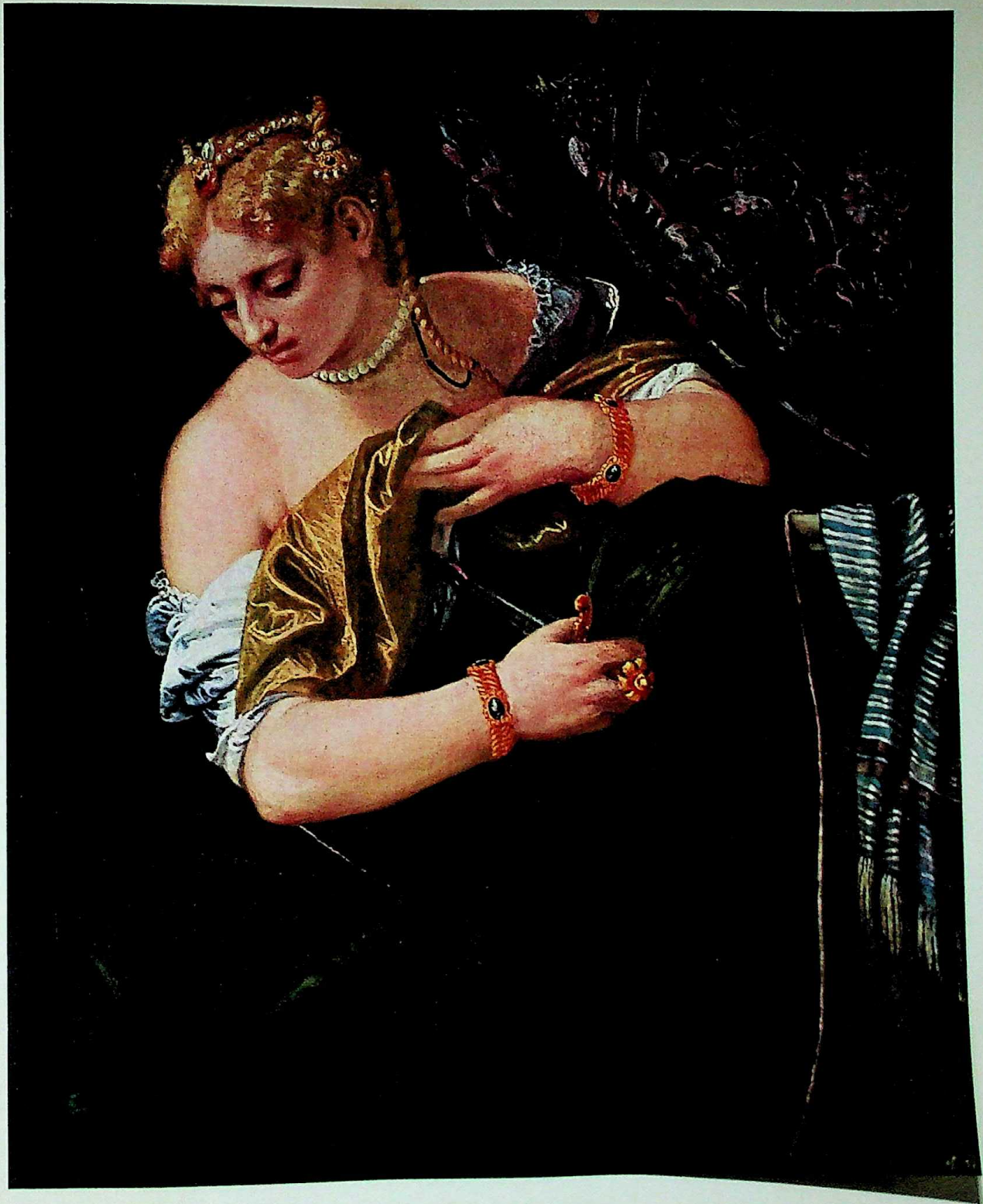


PLATE 70

RAPHAEL (RAFFAELLO SANZIO)

Born 1483 at Urbino, died 1520 at Rome

THE MADONNA IN THE MEADOW

Poplar, 113 × 88.5 cm. (46½ × 34½ in.) Dated 1505. Inv. No. 175

In 1504 Raphael came to Florence from Perugia, and remained there almost continuously until he moved to Rome in 1508-9. During his Florentine period he quickly freed himself from the influence of Perugino and developed his own personal style, through which he sought to obtain harmonious clarity of form and a skilful balance of forces within a self-contained and self-sufficient composition. Three Madonnas, which Raphael painted with complete success between the age of twenty-two and twenty-four, and which are now widely recognized as being among the most important work of European art, show how soon the young artist began to achieve perfect solutions to his problems: the "Madonna in the Meadow" (1505); the "Madonna with the Goldfinch" (1506; Florence, Uffizi); and the so-called "Belle Jardinière" (1507; Paris, Louvre). Each of these pictures is a variation on the theme of a compact group of three figures in the open air; and together they mark a gradual progression from "hieratic" severity to an idyllic freedom from tension.

Embodying structural principles derived from Michelangelo and Leonardo, the Vienna group is enclosed within an almost equilateral triangle, which conditions the poses of the individual figures and expresses the psychological bond between them. One has no difficulty in tracing the outline of this triangle, starting at the toes of the infant St John's right foot, proceeding upwards to the Virgin's head, and then down again to her brightly lit right foot—or, rather, to where the edge of her mantle wraps round the foot. All the same, it is worth noticing how in some places one's eye can advance rapidly, while in others—such as along the back of the head and the drapery of the lively, luminous little figure of St John—it is deliberately held up by the richness of the contour. Still more interesting is the way the forms within the triangle are related to its sides. By various devices, these have been linked up to suggest a succession of lines running almost parallel to those of the containing figure. Naturally, a lot of very careful thought went into the creation of this ingenious, highly complex structure, and its slow development can be followed on a sheet in the Albertina, which is covered on both sides with a whole series of experimental pen-and-ink sketches, and in a drawing at Oxford. As already implied, the unity of the group has been achieved by means of a system of lines that are sometimes plain to the eye and sometimes hidden. As a part of this unifying apparatus, the figure of the infant Christ, between his mother's hands, is particularly effective, in that it marks the intersection of lines related to both sides of the triangle. The Virgin's pose is, if anything, even more telling; for while the upper part of her body faces in the direction of her pointed foot, and therefore strengthens the right side of the triangle, the turn of her head and the direction of her gaze downwards towards St John consolidate the left side of the triangle. Her head and shoulders rise above the pleasant verdure, modified by a warm brownish tone of the meadow, and stand out against the summer radiance of a clear, blue sky. This extends over a distant landscape that has unmistakable connections with Northern art.

Raphael painted the "Madonna in the Meadow" for his friend the scholarly Florentine patrician Taddeo Taddei, who was also a friend of Pietro Bembo. Vasari saw the work in Taddei's house, and it was still there when he published the second edition of his *Lives* in 1568. No doubt treasured as a family heirloom, it remained in the same house for nearly another century, and was seen there by Filippo Baldinucci. Archduke Ferdinand Karl of the Tyrol and his wife Anna paid a visit to Florence between the end of 1661 and February, 1662, and in all probability it was then that the Archduke bought the picture "for a considerable sum". However, he did not have long to enjoy it in his residence at Innsbruck, as he died on December 31, before the year was out. The following year a considerable part of his collection, including Raphael's Madonna, was transferred from Innsbruck to Schloss Ambras, which already housed the collection of his ancestor Archduke Ferdinand of the Tyrol. From there, in 1773, it passed to Vienna, when, along with other important works of art from the royal castles, it was needed to augment the Imperial collection then being reorganized in the Upper Belvedere. In the catalogue of this new arrangement (Mechel, 1783) it is referred to as "the Holy Virgin sitting in a verdant landscape". This description is the source of its modern title, which first appeared round about the middle of the nineteenth century.



PLATE 71

ANDREA DEL SARTO (ANDREA D'AGNOLO DI FRANCESCO)

Born 1486 at Florence, died there 1530

THE LAMENTATION

Poplar, 99 × 120 cm. (39 × 47¹/₄ in.) Signed bottom right: AND. SAR. FLO. FAB. Inv. No. 201

Andrea's surname "del Sarto" is a reference to the occupation of his father, who was a tailor. Unlike Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo, this painter never left Florence except for a period in France at the court of Francis I sometime during 1518-19. With his inner, spiritual nobility, his independence of mind, and his personal way of experiencing things, Andrea looked further into the future than did the in some ways more conventional Fra Bartolommeo, on whom the chief formative influence was the art of Perugino—as can be judged from his Vienna "Presentation in the Temple" (Inv. No. 207).

One is justified in reproducing the "Lamentation" immediately after the "Madonna in the Meadow" because another painting by Andrea—the "Charity", dated 1518 and now in the Louvre—contains a direct reference to Raphael's picture in its triangular arrangement. It shows, too, the influence of Leonardo, whose late style Andrea was able to study at first hand during his visit to France. The triangle also plays a part in the Vienna picture, which was probably painted after his return to Florence. Here, however, it is confined to the figure of the Madonna, and it has been conceived as something solid, fitting into the spacial scheme of the composition. For it is clear that the Virgin has turned her body somewhat towards the spectator's left and therefore obliquely into the picture-space. Through the placing of the angels' hands and the slight inward curve of Christ's body around that of his mother, the Madonna is surrounded by the three other figures, so that she becomes both literally and metaphorically the picture's central motif. The look of sorrow that she directs towards the spectator calls on him, as it were, to fill the space above the body of her son, and thus complete the circle round her. Within the powerful, mysterious tension of this circle she remains entirely alone, emphasized as *Mater dolorosa* and as the focal point of the composition by her size. For she has been made much bigger than the two angels and the almost—relative to her—childlike figure of Christ, thereby recalling the divergence of scale in a medieval German "Pietà" (or *Vesperbild*). It can be demonstrated that other works by Andrea also contain clear signs of contact with Northern art; and Vasari was the first to mention Dürer's influence on him.

No less remarkable than the composition of the "Lamentation" is its colouring. The chilly solemnity of the central harmony of black, blue, and white, emphasized by the chalky pink of the Virgin's hands and slightly warmer tints of her face, is accompanied in the two angels by an arrangement of bright, lively colours that seems almost modern in its boldness. Charged with emotion, it fits in well with the nervous, agitated expressions on the angels' faces. On the left, the colours of the angel's wing spread out above the bluish, upward-tilted head of Christ like a rainbow or a mysterious halo; while there is something unearthly about the bright rose that frames the wing of the angel on the right. Not even the best reproduction can do full justice to the modulations of tone and colour that have been revealed by a recent cleaning in the predominantly white passages and in the flesh tints.

The Vienna Gallery also possesses one of Andrea's early works—the "Tobias and the Angel" (Inv. No. 182) dating from about 1511. In it the colouring is even more violent, robust, and variegated than in the "Lamentation"; but one notices, even at this stage, a tendency towards those novel colour combinations that were to exert a particularly strong influence on Florentine art right down to the seventeenth century.

Vasari mentioned a "Lamentation" in SS Annuziata at Florence in his biography of the artist, and it may have been the Vienna picture. In 1638 the latter belonged to the Duke of Buckingham. When the Duke's collection came under the hammer at Antwerp in 1648, Andrea's work was bought on behalf of Emperor Ferdinand III, and it is known to have been at Prague in 1718. In 1723 it was transferred to Vienna, when Charles VI was enriching the Imperial gallery and reorganizing it in the Stallburg. Storffer showed it there in the third volume (1733) of his painted "inventory".

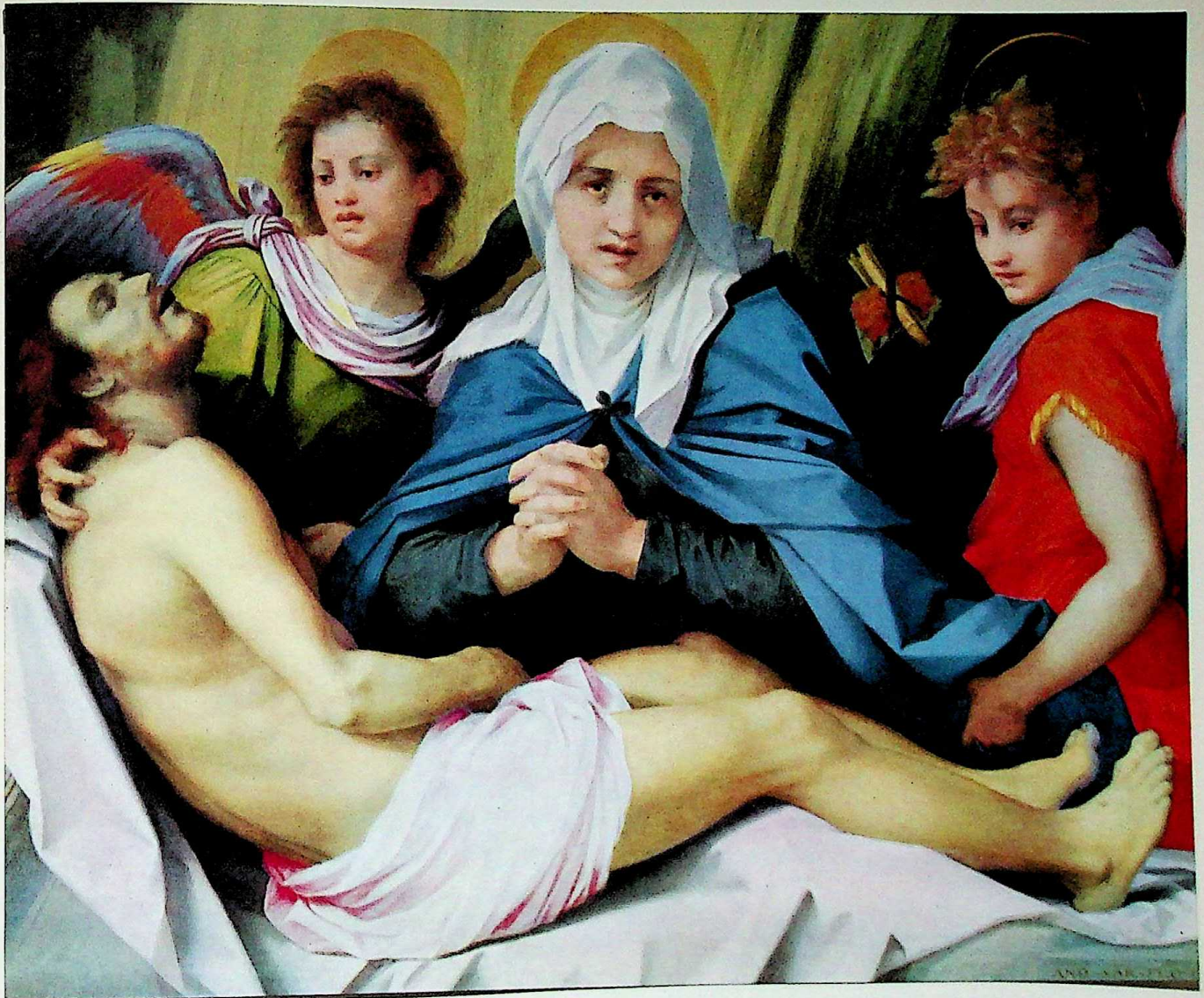


PLATE 72

CORREGGIO (ANTONIO ALLEGRI)

Born 1489-94 at Correggio, died there 1534

JUPITER AND IO

Canvas, 163.5 × 74 cm. (64¹/₄ × 29¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 274

One of the most personal aspects of Correggio's painting is the way in which he combined a new, expressive rendering of the subject with an idealization achieved through a refined and hitherto unknown luminosity. It produced a weightlessness in his figure style, which, triumphant in the Parma dome frescoes, was to influence all Baroque art and even Rococo painting, the development of which is inconceivable without Correggio's example.

"Jupiter and Io" and "The Rape of Ganymede", two jewels of the Vienna Gallery, are outstanding examples of the master's work. In them, Correggio's qualities shine forth, particularly since the cleaning and removal of disfiguring repaint and varnish. Both subjects lend themselves wonderfully to his preference for forms that seem to float—indeed, this freedom from the law of gravity was, for the artist, the very theme itself.

In the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells of Jupiter's love for the nymph Io, who was the daughter of the river god Inachus. She tried to evade Jupiter, but he spread darkness over the countryside, checked her flight, and overcame her modesty. The painter's imagination went beyond that of the poet, for here the god has transformed himself into a cloud, out of which a face and an amorphous "hand" emerge indistinctly. Moreover, Ovid's evocation of nocturnal darkness suggested to Correggio the contrast between the dark, steely blue and grey of the cloud, and the divine luminosity of the nude, modelled with cool, transparent shadows. This figure is made even more wondrously radiant, even more voluptuous, by the dazzling whiteness of the cloth that detaches it from the reddish or yellow-green earth and the mossy urn entangled in roots. The effect of lightness and abandon comes from the balancing of the various movements, but above all from the extremely sensitive play of lines that are now clean-curving and sinuous, now frayed and broken.

In "The Rape of Ganymede" (Inv. No. 276), which forms a counterpart to "Jupiter and Io", the darkness of the cloud is replaced and opposed by the sunlit gaiety of a radiant landscape and a pure blue sky. Nevertheless, the boy's bare arms and shoulder stand out luminously against the eagle's black feathers in a way that recalls the contrast in the companion picture; and one again finds a pattern of S-curves, here used, one above the other, to lead the eye upwards from the dog and the slender tree-trunk. The Ganymede figure reappears as an angel on the St Bernard sprandel in the Parma Cathedral dome decorations, a fact which, taken together with the stylistic similarities leads one to suppose that, like the frescoes, both the Vienna pictures were produced round about 1530.

Two larger canvases—the "Leda and the Swan" (Berlin, Staatliche Museen) and the "Danaë" (Rome, Galleria Borghese)—also probably belong to the same period, and all four seem to have been intended to decorate a single room in fulfilment of a programme illustrating the loves of Jupiter. There are many indications that they were commissioned by Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, who, according to Vasari's admittedly very inexact account, presented them to Charles V on the occasion of the Emperor's coronation at Bologna (1529-30). Later all four pictures turned up in Spain, where they belonged to Philip II's favourite, his Secretary of State Antonio Perez. When, in 1579, Perez fell from favour, his family appears to have considered selling his valuable art collection, whereupon Emperor Rudolph II tried to obtain the Correggios which particularly attracted him—through his ambassador Khevenhüller. He was too late, however; but shortly before the discontinuation of the sale, the sculptor Pompeo Leoni had managed to acquire "Jupiter and Io" and "Danaë"—whereas "The Rape of Ganymede" and "Leda" ended up in the possession of the Spanish crown. Only after Philip II's death (1598) did the Imperial ambassador's stubborn negotiations bear full fruit, when, in 1603, the Ganymede and Leda pictures were handed over to him for Rudolph. This probably occurred shortly after the other two had been obtained from Leoni. Though the larger works fell into Swedish hands during the sack of Prague, and thenceforward went their separate way, the smaller ones were recorded at an early date in the Treasury at Vienna. They remained there until their transfer to the newly arranged gallery in the Upper Belvedere.

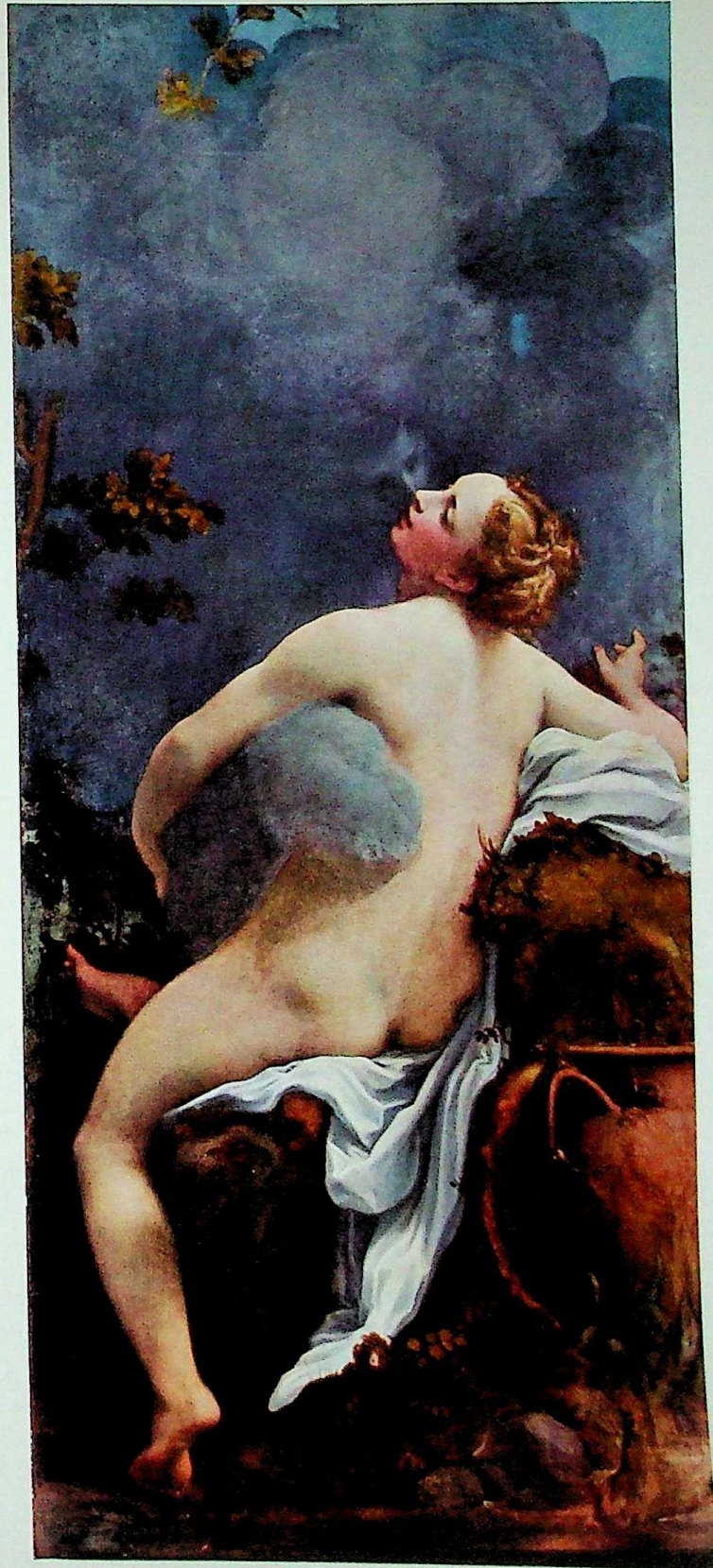


PLATE 73

PARMIGIANINO (FRANCESCO MAZZOLA)

Born 1503 at Parma, died 1540 at Casalmaggiore

CUPID CARVING HIS BOW

Limewood, 135 × 65.3 cm. ($53\frac{1}{8} \times 25\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Inv. No. 275

In his life of Parmigianino, Vasari tells how, when the young and highly precocious painter was getting ready to leave for Rome (1524), his uncles advised him to prepare some specimens of his work so that, on his arrival, he could show them to patrons and fellow members of his profession. With this in mind, he began one day to paint himself while looking in a convex barber's mirror. Noticing the weird distortions produced by the curvature of the glass—how the beams of the ceiling twisted and how the doors and all the buildings were strangely foreshortened—he felt an urge to reproduce it all, just for fun. Accordingly, he had a wooden ball turned in the lathe, and divided it so as to make a hemisphere similar in size to the mirror. On it, he began very skilfully to reproduce all that he saw in the mirror, and particularly himself. As Parmigianino was extremely handsome and looked more like an angel than a man, his image on the ball appeared divine.

Today this picture, too, is in the Vienna Gallery (Inv. No. 286), and one is justified in recalling it here because its odd character sheds light on the "Cupid Carving His Bow", as well as on Mannerist art in general. Vasari, who as a boy saw the "mirror portrait" at the home of Pietro Aretino, described how strangers passing through Arezzo used to admire it as something out of the ordinary; for at that period rarity, singularity, and playfulness were highly valued in art. Now that the techniques of representing nature, space, and perspective had been fully mastered, artists made use of them to record more interesting and surprising aspects of the world around them. Just as, in the self-portrait, Parmigianino obviously concentrated his interest as an artist and his taste for technical display on the exaggeration of depth and the ludicrous yet in a sense "true" divergence in size between the enormous hand and little head, so here, with his "Cupid Carving His Bow", he achieved a view that was new in a similar way. Indeed, it is what really brings the subject to life. Though one is right to admire, in the boy's body subtly lit from behind its back, Parmigianino's ever-recurring "grace", the elastic firmness of the smooth limbs, the delicacy of the flesh-tints, the transparency of the bluish and greenish shadows, and the formal purity of the figure, all become really effective through the new approach to them that the subsidiary motif imposes. In the space created by the corners of the books on which Cupid has placed his foot, the eye is caught by the two other little *amorini*, which in a sense provide the key to the picture. For Vasari was certainly right when he explained how one of them was grasping the other by the shoulder, laughingly wanting it to touch Cupid with a finger, while the other did not wish to touch him and was crying, thereby showing that it was afraid of getting burned by the fire of love. Here, then, is the true visual centre, the point of departure for studying the composition, and the nucleus out of which Parmigianino's imagination developed the concept to its full artistic embodiment.

However, the artist drew on literary sources, as well. *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius may have suggested to him Cupid's magnificent golden locks, and perhaps also the carving of the bow, to replace the one that he had been deprived of by Venus in her anger at his love for Psyche.

According to Vasari, the picture was painted for a certain Cavaliere Bajardo of Parma, a friend of the artist. It was then inherited by Marcantonio Cavalca, who may have sold it in Spain. In 1585 it belonged there to Antonio Perez, but the following year, after Perez's fall and flight, it passed to the Spanish crown. To obtain it, Rudolph II undertook lengthy negotiations, both through his ambassador Khevenhüller (see notes on Plate 72) and personally with an agent at Brussels, and in 1603 the picture reached Prague. It is recorded as having been in the Treasury at Vienna from 1631, and Boschini praised it there in 1660. It entered the Imperial gallery when the latter was organized in the Belvedere (catalogue of 1783).

The Vienna Gallery also possesses an extremely important example of Parmigianino's work as a portraitist in the male portrait supposed to be that of the *condottiero* Malatesta Baglione (Inv. No. 277).

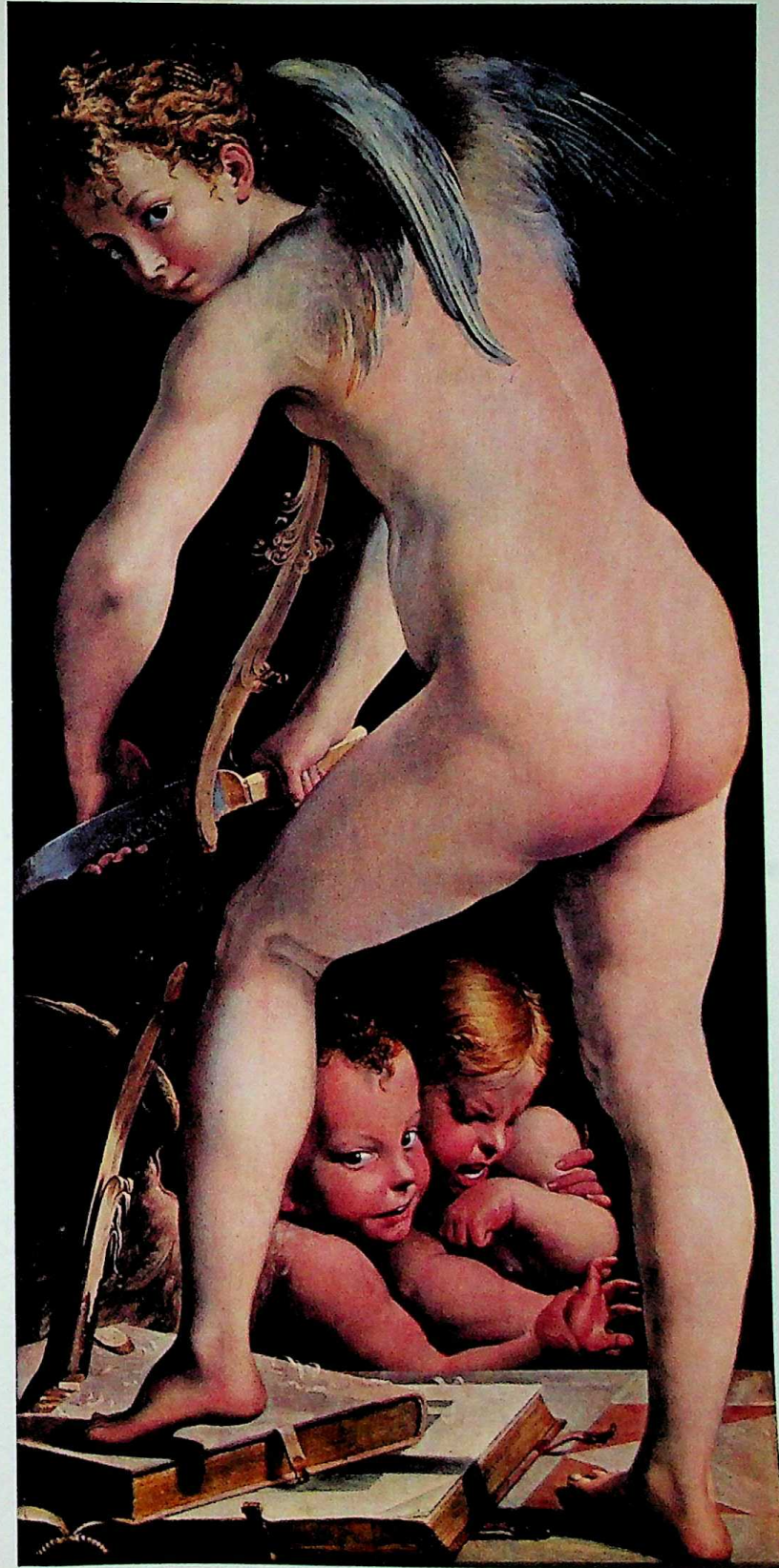


PLATE 74

BRONZINO (AGNOLO COSIMO DI MARIANO)

Born 1503 at Monticelli (near Florence), died 1572 at Florence

THE HOLY FAMILY

Poplar, 124.5 × 99.5 cm. (49 × 39¹/₈ in.) Signed: BROZINO FIORETINO. Inv. No. 183

On a visit to Vienna in 1792, Archduke Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany, arranged with his brother Emperor Francis II for an exchange of pictures between the collections at Florence and Vienna. The initial discussions between the two rulers took place in the only recently organized Belvedere gallery. Clearly, the new, rationalist conception of the Imperial gallery as a scholarly institution where the various artistic trends could be studied as fully as possible played a fundamental part in the agreement, and the intention of the two princes—remarkable in itself—was that each museum should draw on its respective surplus. However, for Vienna the outcome was not very satisfactory, as in return for works by Titian, Bellini, Palma, Dürer, Veronese, Van Dyck, and Rubens, Florence sent a very modest batch of pictures, by far the most important of which was Bronzino's "Holy Family".

A pupil of Pontormo and through him linked with Andrea del Sarto (see Plate 71), Bronzino counted as one of the leaders of early Florentine Mannerism, and he was highly regarded by Michelangelo, whom he followed closely in his religious and allegorical compositions. On these foundations, he developed a peculiarly intellectual, unpictorial, sculptural style, of which his "Holy Family" is a very characteristic example from his best years, round about 1534-40.

Bronzino was another of those for whom the complete mastery of natural forms only served as a means to an end. Having solved all his technical problems, the painter was driven on towards a new, rigorous stylization, now accepting, now rejecting reality in an interplay of effects that provides the chief attraction of this art.

Here, following Michelangelo, it is above all the essential plasticity that conforms to nature, for all accidental features have been sacrificed to the basic form. Each gesture is sober and measured, while the modelling everywhere reveals a desire for purity, cleanness, and clarity. Nature is most clearly rejected, on the other hand, in the rendering of individual substances, as shown by the subtly modulated but unrealistic colouring of the skin. For these are not bodies made of flesh and blood, but statues of great plastic force. Likewise, the normal surface qualities of the hair and clothing are also absent. The very grouping of the figures is unnaturalistic, too, and the rocky barrier in the foreground serves only to establish and explain the poses of the two children. Planes and volumes seem to merge in a tight, almost spaceless composition. As for the colour, with a solemn quality that comes from its enamel-like clearness and purity, it acts as a kind of foil to the plasticity of the forms.

In short, the picture owes its great beauty to a careful, pondered process of stylization, and to a combination of the closest naturalism and the most rigorous abstraction that one comes across over and over again in the work of the Florentine Mannerists. The expression on the alabaster face of the infant Christ, who is looking at the spectator, imbues the whole of Bronzino's still, marble world with a heightened reality. Even the figures in the foreground are bathed in the harsh light from the stormy distance, where castles standing out brightly against the cold dark green vaguely presage certain of El Greco's effects.

Bronzino is also represented in the Vienna Gallery by some very famous portraits. The little, miniature-like one of Grand Duke Cosimo I (Inv. No. 212), painted on tin, calls to mind the sobriety of a Holbein. There is also a large, knee-length likeness of a Medici princess, in which the subject's costume has been exquisitely described (Inv. No. 2583). The freshness and clarity of the vision, together with the brightly luminous colour, make it a highly characteristic example of the artist's work as a portrait painter.



PLATE 75

NICCOLÒ DELL' ABBATE

Born 1512 at Modena, died 1571 at Fontainebleau

THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL

Canvas, 177.5 × 128.5 cm. (69⁷/₈ × 50⁵/₈ in.) Inv. No. 2035

Born at Modena and trained at Parma under the influence of Correggio and Parmigianino, Niccolò dell' Abbate, like Rosso and Primaticcio, was among the Italian Mannerists who travelled to France in order to satisfy the exacting, pampered tastes of Francis I. There they developed the new, refined figure and decorative style that characterized the so-called School of Fontainebleau, and formed the basis of a French national art. Reaching France in 1552 at about the age of forty, Niccolò remained there for the rest of his life. He became the closest collaborator of Primaticcio, after many of whose drawings he made paintings.

It is understandable that the Reformation and Counter-Reformation should have taken a considerable interest in the story of Saul of Tarsus's miraculous conversion, and that this should therefore have become the subject of an ever-growing number of pictures. Bruegel, for example, in his painting of 1567, which now belongs to the Vienna Gallery (Inv. No. 3690), was mainly concerned with the column of soldiers making its way through the mountains. Consequently, the incident of the revelation passes almost unnoticed, even though it is the true spiritual centre of the work, and the justification of all the display. Niccolò, on the other hand, limited his subject-matter to Saul, who has been flung to the ground, and his prancing horse behind him.

Conceived according to a formal scheme that, starting out from Raphael, can be traced right through to the seventeenth century, the figure of Saul occupies a third of the picture, along with the ground beneath it and landscape beyond. All the rest is filled by sky and by the fiery grey horse, which, rearing up on its hind legs, almost reaches the top edge of the canvas with its head. Only the beast's powerful, rounded croup is linked to the ground and Saul's body by means of the dense mass of reeds and few palms behind it. Towards the right, one gets a splendid view of a distant landscape, which includes a town spread out over slopes that rise towards a chain of jagged, blue mountains. This fresh, radiant, variegated description of nature numbers among the choicest of its period.

Niccolò's work provides a particularly good demonstration of the deeper meaning of the Mannerist treatment of form. Only so long as we have not yet found the right access to the picture will Saul's pose and the attitude of the bounding horse with its small head seem modishly distorted and exaggerated. Yet this new approach is clearly indicated by many features: by the low viewpoint; the flowers and leaves painted in such detail that they arrest the eye, and check its advance beyond the foreground; the sword as both the weapon of the persecutor and an attribute of the martyr; but, above all, by the figure of the protagonist himself. For the event has been depicted not as though seen by some onlooker, but as the personal experience of the fallen man—and it is this that constitutes the artist's new "angle of vision". Thus, Saul's twisting pose and undulating drapery express the dizziness of a rider suddenly flung from his saddle, while the apparently tilting landscape and swelling body of the horse as it towers overhead are viewed through the rolling, already almost blinded eyes of the future saint.

The picture, which is assumed to have been painted immediately after the artist's arrival in France, was not brought out of storage until 1912. It is not known when and from whom it was acquired. The Vienna Gallery also possesses one of Niccolò's most notable portraits, the so-called "Man with a Parrot" (Inv. No. 6114), which presents a powerful colour effect in the combination of the man's back and white garments, the green background, and the red and yellow bird. This work was first put on show in the Gallery at the same time as "The Conversion of St Paul".

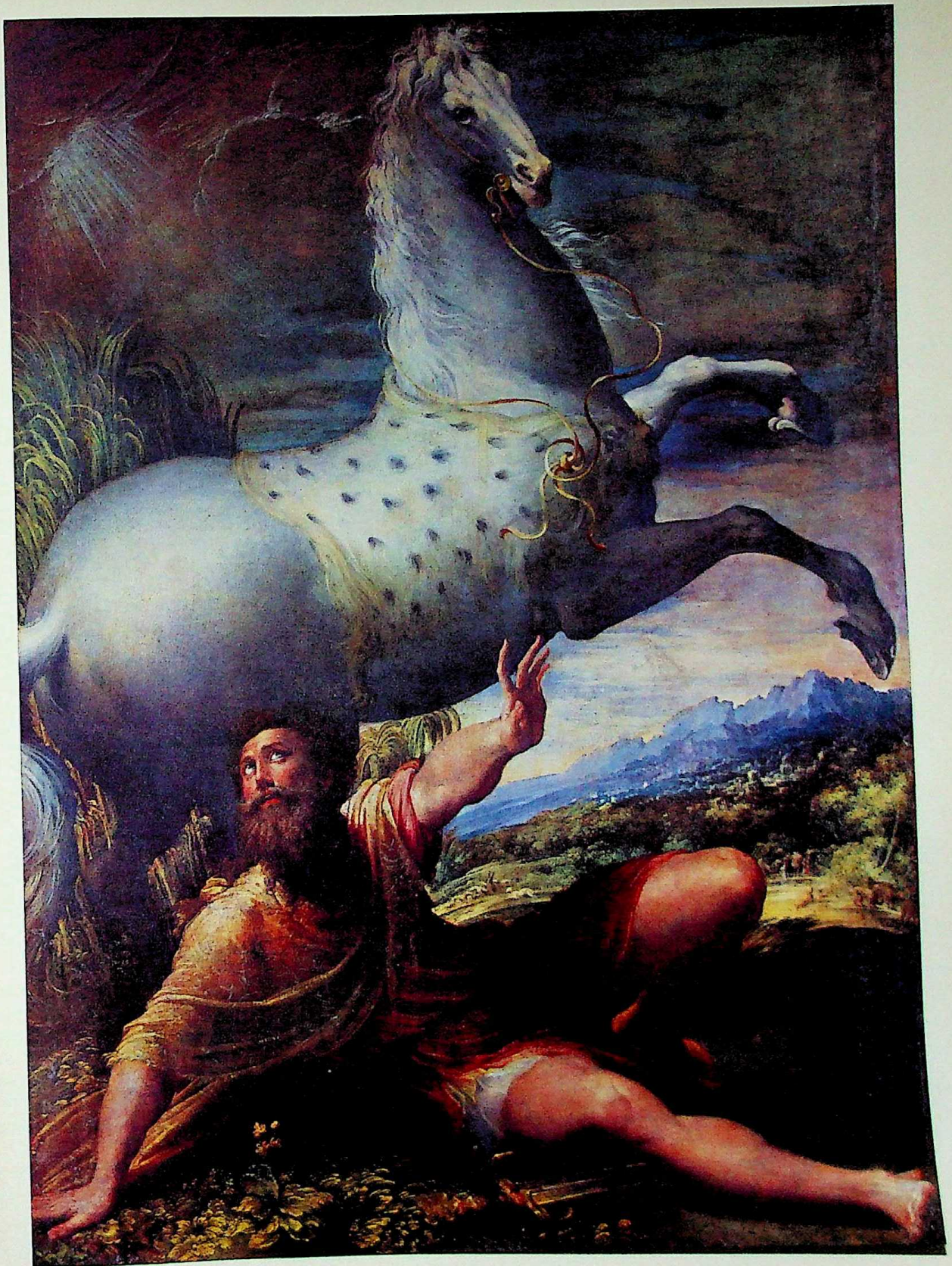


PLATE 76

GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDO

Born c. 1527 at Milan, died there 1593

SUMMER

Limewood, 67 × 50.8 cm. (26³/₈ × 20 in.) Signed on the collar:
 GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDO. F, and dated on the shoulder: 1563. Inv. No. 1589

Arcimboldo, whose father was also an artist, came from a good Milanese family. In 1562, he became Court Painter (*Hauskonterfetter*) to Emperor Ferdinand I, retaining the position throughout the reign of Maximilian II (1564–76), and for another eleven years under Rudolph II. Even after he had returned to his homeland (1587), he remained in touch with the Emperor, who, having already conferred on him a hereditary title in 1580, gave him what was no doubt a sign of his highest esteem, when, in 1592, he made him a count palatine. It was not just the Imperial court, however, that appreciated the artist, who was also famous as a scene-painter and an organizer of festivities. Among his friends he counted the Milanese writers Lomazzo and Comanini, whose treatises had a great influence on Mannerist painting during the transition from Renaissance to Baroque art. Both men admired the wit displayed in Arcimboldo's pictures, as well as his outstanding sense of composition. Nevertheless, after his death, there followed three centuries of almost complete oblivion. On the few occasions when his name was mentioned, it was usually due to a mistake. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did he again begin to receive attention and, more recently still, he has even been claimed as an ancestor of the Surrealists.

Usually Arcimboldo depicted human forms made up of non-human elements, a type of picture that became his speciality. For example, he composed a strange landscape with ruins, which, when turned sideways, appears as a corroded human face; arranged a still-life of vegetables on a plate so that, upside down, it reveals the cook; and represented a librarian out of nothing but books. He also painted panels showing the Four Elements and the Four Seasons as bust-length figures constructed of objects relevant to these themes. "Summer", which numbers among his best achievements, is one of these. The artist's name appears woven into the figure's straw collar, an artichoke adorns its chest, and its merry face is built up of fruit and vegetables. Arcimboldo's allegory of summer *joie de vivre* and fertility is an extremely clever conception, a fantastic combination of delicate and vigorous references. The interaction of light and dark hues ranging from white to yellow, green, blue, purple, and pink—all of which find their place within the general harmony of golden-yellow and very dark green—gives the face a smiling luminosity. It is a kind of visual play on associated ideas, at once subtle and naïve. Though not the first to practise it, Arcimboldo was the only artist to devote himself to it so whole-heartedly. Often it became an instrument of satire, but with him it never grew tasteless, and always manages to surprise. Doubtless the composition of "Summer" also owes something to memories of the sharply silhouetted profile portraits on coins and medals that the Renaissance had already endowed with a grandeur beyond the merely descriptive.

From the date (1563), we can deduce that the picture was executed at Prague for Ferdinand I, perhaps as part of one of Arcimboldo's cycles representing the different seasons, which were so popular that he often had to repeat them—twice for Rudolph II, for example. Yet these works did more than just amuse, and may even have embodied the idea of man as the measure of all things. Arcimboldo's great success at the Imperial court was no doubt partly due to the manner in which, by way of trickery and entertainment, he taught the noble owners of cabinets of art and curiosities to appreciate aesthetic values. For all its strangeness, there is nothing ridiculous or comical about Arcimboldo's portrait of Rudolph as the god Vertumnus (now at Skokloster Castle in Sweden), composed entirely of fruit, flowers, and ears of corn; while a head of Herod made up of the naked bodies of the Innocents is downright gruesome.

"Summer" probably belonged to Rudolph II's collection at Prague, but the only thing known for certain is that in 1772 it was transferred from Prague to the Vienna Treasury, together with a "Winter" (Inv. No. 1590), a "Water" (Inv. No. 1586), and a "Fire" (Inv. No. 1585).



PLATE 77

JACOPO DA EMPOLI (JACOPO CHIMENTI)

Born 1554 at Florence, died there 1640

SUSANNA BATHING

Oil on canvas, 229 × 172 cm. (90 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 67 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Signed and dated on the step:
JACOPO EMPOLI. F. 1600. Inv. No. 1518

Rarely has an artist succeeded in depicting a great lady as clearly and convincingly as here. With her languidly graceful gestures, she provides the composition's focal point, even though not placed at its centre. Everything else seems to arrange itself spontaneously around her, including the view of the garden. This serves purely as a background setting off the subtle contours of the seated and standing figures, which in their turn emphasize the diagonal flow of the composition.

When artists chose Susanna as their theme, they nearly always showed her in the nude (see Plate 67), without bothering too much about the chastity that is the real subject of the story. Indeed, a fully-clad Susanna in a work by a painter of the Renaissance or its descent is something extremely rare. That, however, Jacopo's canvas really does represent the wife of Joacim is proved by the figures of the two elders, barely visible among the trees on the right. Yet neither they nor the group of women reveal any trace of the Bible story's drama.

The picture is characterized by luxury and the utmost refinement: costly materials, soft to the touch, combine with subtle harmonies of broken colours for our enjoyment. Even the arrangement of the three women has been proportioned in a highly decorative way. With her long, delicate limbs—which, if she were standing up, would make her appear abnormally tall—Susanna provides a perfect example of pleasantly affected female representation. Here, Jacopo betrays the influence of Florentine Mannerism, and of Pontormo in particular.

Immediately behind the group of the three women and the little dog begins the landscape, which lacks depth and any appreciable distinction between the middle- and background. It all has the air of a back-cloth: the idyllic park, the beautiful fountain, the Orientalizing silhouette of the architecture, and even the two impertinent old men. Nothing in this masterly picture indicates direct experience and personal involvement; much, including the stiff pose of the lap-dog, even appears strangely lifeless. The total effect strongly suggests that, instead of composing the scene straight out of his imagination, the artist reproduced a representation of it by real human beings, on the lines of the *tableaux vivants* that no doubt already at that date were arranged during festivities (see notes on Plate 83).

Jacopo's painting is first mentioned in a pre-1719 inventory of the collection at Schloss Ambras. It was in Vienna by 1781.



PLATE 78

ANNIBALE CARRACCI

Born 1560 at Bologna, died 1609 at Rome

VENUS AND ADONIS

Oil on canvas, 217 × 246 cm. (85³/₈ × 96⁷/₈ in.) Inv. No. 234

Towards the end of the tenth book of his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells of how, while Cupid is kissing his mother, he accidentally scratches her breast with an arrow. The wound has gone deeper than Venus realizes, and she is captivated by the beauty of Adonis, who just then appears on the scene. Though "she has always been accustomed to take her ease in the shade, and improve her beauty by carefully tending it", she now follows the hunter "over ridges, through woods, and across rocky places thick with thorns... and cheers on the hounds".

This contrast between the goddess's habit of peacefully enjoying her own beauty and the subsequent restlessness of the hunt was enough to fire the painter's imagination. His opulent nude glows amid the dark shadow, and the diagonal she forms is prolonged by the glimmering view through the foliage, in which can be seen bunches of grapes that cling closely to the trees. Below, the pool of water with the two doves adds its own freshness to the cool tones of the background. Richly adorned and stressed by every means of beautification, the broad, well-built figure of Adonis dominates the right half of the picture. His head is framed by his fluttering blue cloak, as, with a broad gesture, he sweeps aside the branches, and turns towards Venus. He is separated from her, however, by the dark, almost uniform shadow of the bush, which merges with the shade on his clothing. The three figures have been arranged in the form of a capital N, while Adonis's slight turn to the left introduces a highly Baroque interpretation of the very ancient *clausula* motif. Not only does it check the movement from the left, but it even forces the eye to turn back, and read the composition in the opposite direction. After Adonis's profusion of silvery, golden, and blond tones, and the exuberance of all his various superimposed garments, the flowing figure of the goddess seems to be of positively classical purity and clarity, as she rests outstretched on the fiery red drapery, from which issues a tongue of yellow.

The painter has paid special attention to the "hinges" of his composition—to the transitions between the different figures: in the bottom corner of the N, Venus's left foot almost encounters that of Adonis, while mother and child are very closely linked by the complex arrangement of their arms. In actual fact, Adonis does not completely terminate the rhythm of the composition, which only comes finally to rest in the deep though narrow landscape view at the right-hand edge of the canvas. The movement is measured by a very skilful arrangement of superimposed horizontal elements, which direct the eye either right- or leftwards: the black dog, the remarkable form of the bow, the white dog's head silhouetted against the black bush behind it, the gleam of the water, and so on, up to the sky.

A series of sketches and detail studies, now preserved in Florence, London, and Madrid, show how carefully Annibale prepared the picture, as was his custom. "Venus and Adonis" numbers among the masterpieces of the artist, who, partly in collaboration with his brother Agostino and cousin Lodovico, achieved during his earlier years an imposing synthesis of Venetian conquests and the art of Correggio. After he had moved to Rome in 1595, this was enriched by the fruit of an intensive study of Michelangelo and Raphael, which enabled him to evolve a new, highly personal figure and landscape style. The present work probably dates from before he left for Rome: Palma's influence shows most clearly in the Cupid; Venus's soft plumpness suggests the old Titian's ideal of beauty, while her sensitive contours recall Tintoretto; the rich, painterly treatment of Adonis and the way he is embedded in the landscape link up particularly with Veronese's art. Nevertheless, Annibale's very original composition and, above all, his monumental clarification of the planes show how independently and intensively he developed whatever he had learned from others.

The painting, which was among those brought from Schloss Ambras in 1773 to enrich the Vienna collection, was probably acquired by Archduke Ferdinand Karl of the Tyrol (see also Plates 64 and 70). There are two other works by Annibale in the Vienna Gallery, both of which belonged to Leopold Wilhelm: "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" (Inv. No. 267), a gem from the artist's Roman years; and the little "Pietà" (Inv. No. 230), characterized by its noble rhythm, very cool, austere palette, and glimpse of a deeply melancholy landscape.



PLATE 79

CARAVAGGIO (MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO)

Born probably 1573 at Caravaggio (near Bergamo), died 1610 at Porto d'Ercole

DAVID WITH THE HEAD OF GOLIATH

Oil on poplar, 90.5 × 116 cm. (35⁵/₈ × 59⁷/₈ in.) Inv. No. 125

Almost all the artist's pictures are on canvas; the present work is one of the few exceptions. It was also unusual for Caravaggio to paint over another composition, but, under the "David", X-rays have revealed a Mannerist "Venus, Mars, and Cupid", for which the long axis of the support was placed vertically. Generally speaking, Caravaggio's subject—one mainly developed in sculpture—was also given a fairly tall format, as, indeed, is exemplified by the artist's other "David", now in the Borghese gallery at Rome. Caravaggio probably turned the Vienna panel round to help him completely forget the work that he was covering up. Compared with the later Borghese "David", where the figure moves in a more ample space, the Vienna picture seems almost crowded. In the former, the left arm straining to hold up the giant's head is deliberately balanced by the right arm with the sword, held out from the body, and this arrangement produces a static, restful composition. In the latter, however, the burden seems almost too heavy for the boy, who manages to display it and keep his balance only with a great effort.

The Vienna painting is certainly more directly and intensely felt than the one at Rome. David's face expresses the ingenuousness of the poor shepherd boy who has performed an awesomely heroic deed without really understanding it, and Goliath's almost noble look of suffering harmonizes with this effect. In the Borghese picture, on the other hand, the horror on both David's face and the terribly discomposed features of the giant is conveyed with extreme naturalism, even though it has been raised to the level of open pathos. The Vienna "David" dates from the last decade of the sixteenth century, and its very dark background and the sharp lighting that enhances the bodily plasticity are typical of Caravaggio's Roman period.

Though the picture is not recorded as being at Vienna before 1730, when it was in the Stallburg gallery, it had become Imperial property somewhat earlier: in the Prague inventory of 1718, it is attributed to Caravaggio's school. Recently, however—and particularly since its inclusion in the great Caravaggio exhibition at Milan in 1951—it has come increasingly to be regarded as an autograph work. Moreover, according to tradition, the master did not make use of assistants for any of his paintings. In Caravaggio's rather limited *œuvre*, it is surprising how often one comes upon figures of boys, who, at any rate in the mature works, are all clearly individualized. For this reason, the facial resemblance between the Vienna and Rome Davids deserves attention.

There are several contemporary or near-contemporary accounts of Caravaggio's life and work, including those of Baglione, Mancini, and Bellori. It is thought that a remark by the latter may refer to the Vienna "David". If it does, it provides authoritative evidence that the picture is by Caravaggio's hand.



CARAVAGGIO (MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO)

Born probably 1573 at Caravaggio (near Bergamo), died 1610 at Porto d'Ercole

THE MADONNA OF THE ROSARIES

Canvas, 364 × 249 cm. (143 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 98 in.) Inv. No. 147

The legend of the Virgin's injunction to St Dominic to introduce the prayer and feast of the rosary developed during the late fifteenth century. It was taken up by the Counter-Reformation, and in Baroque art it acquired heightened interest. Just a hundred years after Dürer, in his extremely important and famous "Madonna of the Rose Garlands", had interpreted the theme symbolically as a crowning of the various estates by the Virgin, the infant Christ, and St Dominic, Caravaggio produced his version.

To some extent, the work no doubt springs from the urge, universal at the time, to achieve an art capable of making the old subjects seem more real and vivid. Above all, however, it is based on a special fusion, peculiar to Caravaggio, of the religious theme with realistic images drawn from the artist's own experience. For here, in the presence of the holy figures, we no longer find estates—popes and emperors, spiritual and temporal dignitaries—but ordinary people to whom St Dominic distributes ordinary rosaries, just like a monk in real life. The only "person of rank" is the donor, who almost serves as an acolyte to the saint, and, after a fashion, introduces us into the scene. Even he, however, belongs with, if not to, the people—all the more so as the direction of his glance puts him in closest touch with the people in a broader sense, with all those, that is, who came to pray before the picture. The spectator finds himself caught in the violent surge of movement that runs obliquely upwards from the right. A transverse flow is very cleverly made to die away in the folds of the young man's drapery, thus allowing the motion from the same figure's feet towards the head of St Dominic to prevail. Another oblique movement, this time starting in the bottom left-hand corner and leading up to the face of St Peter the Martyr, likewise reveals a strong urge to achieve order through clearly arranged lines of direction, contours, and spaces. Where these two main currents of force meet and then separate again, a void is created, in which towers, with all the majesty of a devotional image, the enthroned Madonna with her Child.

Among the critics of his own day, and from then onwards down to the art historians of the nineteenth century, Caravaggio's work repeatedly encountered bitter opponents. They censured his realism for being a profanation of sacred themes as well as a denial of the principles of great art, and sometimes went so far as to reject his painting completely. Far more important from the very outset, however, were those who recognized the artist's great powers of pictorial organization, through which even the grossest reality was raised to a work of art. In this connection must be mentioned, besides his gift for composition, Caravaggio's almost magical way with light—though a light that is very different from that of reality. It appears in his pictures only where the artist needed it to call up from the darkness some significant object or important detail, and to reveal what might otherwise have passed unnoticed. Colour likewise was of special importance to Caravaggio as a means of imposing order. In the present work, the three kneeling men's garments, with their unmistakably "classical" cast of folds, form a red-ochre, red, and greyish-yellow triangle, against which abuts the equally compact arrangement of greens, yellow, and white on the left. Towards these two colour groups advance the blunt arrow-heads formed by the black and white of the saints and donor. Between the wedges, a space opens up like a valley, and from it shines forth the truly heavenly blue of the Virgin's robe. Finally, there appears above the Madonna the princely red of the baldachin; curving across the entire width of the picture, it provides the most intense, and by far the largest, single patch of colour.

Caravaggio probably painted his "Madonna of the Rosaries" at Rome for the Duke of Modena, and it was almost finished in 1605. For unknown reasons, the work seems to have remained unsold, and it did not even become the property of a second client, who may have been Don Marzio Colonna, the man portrayed as a donor. From a letter of the painter Frans Pourbus the Younger, it is clear that, in September 1607, the picture was at Naples, evidently taken there by Caravaggio when he fled from Rome. At that date, it was up for sale at 400 ducats, shortly after which it came into the possession of Louys Finson, who brought it to Amsterdam, and mentioned it in his will of 1617. Next, Rubens, who had been a great admirer of Caravaggio's art ever since his visit to Rome, clubbed together with some other painters, including Jan Bruegel the Elder and Hendrik van Balen, to buy the work for the very considerable sum of 1800 guilders, and present it to the Dominican church at Antwerp. It had an important influence on Rubens's stylistic development during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when he was at work on his paintings for the church of the Jesuits at Antwerp. Emperor Joseph II acquired it in 1781 for the Imperial gallery, and it arrived at Vienna in 1786.



PLATE 81

GUIDO RENI

Born 1575 at Bologna, died there 1642

ST JEROME

Canvas, 278 × 238 cm. (109½ × 93¾ in.) Inv. No. 9124

Of the three large pictures that best represent Guido Reni's art in the Vienna Gallery, the most renowned is certainly "The Baptism of Christ" (Inv. No. 222). Well documented, it numbers among the painter's masterpieces, and, as one of the first works of his dawning maturity, it has special importance in connection with the development of his style. The artificial lighting of his earlier pictures already retreats before a cool, clear, in places almost silvery light, which softly models the forms, and enhances the purity of the colours.

"The Four Seasons" (Inv. No. 236) can also be related fairly unequivocally to information handed down to us. It is certain that, in 1621, the work was bought for the Duke of Buckingham in Rome, shortly after its completion. When Buckingham's collection came under the hammer, the picture passed into Habsburg hands, as did also "The Baptism". In "The Four Seasons", a remarkably academic classicism dominates the arrangement and modelling of the chalky nudes and semi-nudes, who appear amid billowing, palest lilac or golden-yellow and pink draperies.

In 1958, these two pictures that both became Habsburg property at a very early date, were joined by the "St Jerome", acquired from the Liechtenstein collection. Here we are dealing with a work of the artist's late period. It dates from about 1635, and belongs to the group in which, limiting himself to a single figure, or at most two, Reni gave of his best. The picture is set apart by the clear, transparent light, which is remarkable even among the late works, by the positively expressive—and, for Reni, unusual—intensity of the colour, and by the imposing order of the general composition.

St Jerome's luminous, parchment-coloured body rises in a broken line along the diagonal from left to right. With its masterly display of withered skin, solid bone-structure, and tough, taut muscles, it looks like some primeval landscape. The fiery red of the saint's cloak combines with the radiant whiteness of the angel and dark green of the wooded landscape to form an oblique, rippling tricolour. Around the angel appears the blue of a slightly cloudy sky, in which the figure's golden blond hair looks like the sun. To the right of the saint can be seen an area of dark grey from which emerge the lion's brown head and paws. Finally, there follows the light, warm grey of the rocky coulisse in the foreground. Together with the rock formation above, it constitutes a solid clamp, which effectively checks the onrush of all the jagged lines climbing obliquely from the left. At the point where this rocky arc almost touches the right edge of the picture, St Jerome's book has been propped up on a ledge of chilly grey stone—the only horizontal in the whole composition. Free, luminous, and surrounded by air, the saint's writing hand is suspended over the cold, white page. By way of a broad curve, the smooth arm links it to the bearded head, which, through its ecstatically submissive movement, is in its turn connected with the angel and source of heavenly light. In short, the coherence, co-ordination, grandeur, and clarity of the whole give it rare persuasive power.

It is not known by what route the picture found its way into the Liechtenstein gallery.



PLATE 82

BERNARDO STROZZI

Born 1581 at Genoa, died 1644 at Venice

THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

Canvas, 106 × 138 cm. ($41\frac{3}{4} \times 54\frac{3}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 258

From the story of the widow of Zarephath, who, though very short of victuals during a famine, had to provide food for Elijah, sent to her by the Lord (1 Kings xvii, 9), two different moments have been picked out and merged: the fetching of water for the thirsty stranger, and the prophet's consolation of the woman, when she made known her distress. "Fear not... For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

With its Baroque eloquence, the movement of the figures is wholly dominated by the incident. The widow places her hands on the vessels, as though indicating that they are almost empty, and looks questioningly at Elijah, while her small son offers him a bowl of water. As for the prophet, he is passing on Jehovah's promise of gifts to his hostess, and opens his right hand in a gesture that, for Renaissance and Baroque art, signified munificence. The dark background gives no indication of space, nor does it even localize the action, and the stone table is there purely to support the vessels that are so important to the story. Since the eye-level has been fixed in the same horizontal plane as the table-top, the spectator is in effect looking up at the figures, which adds to their grandeur and the impressiveness of the scene. One's eye gradually ascends by way of the three hands in the middle of the picture towards the three heads, finally reaching that of the old man—a noble and typically Baroque representation of a sage or patriarch. Everything about the work seems painterly, even the strongly three-dimensional appearance of the bodies, which comes in part from the way the figures lean towards each other. This painterliness is enhanced by the broad, loose, confident brushwork, and one senses how much the artist enjoyed the harmonies and contrasts of his subdued yet varied colours.

Although in its own way a virtuoso performance, the picture is no mere outward illustration of the Bible scene, for one detects Strozzi's spiritual participation in the event. At Genoa, they called him "*il Capucino*" (the Capuchin monk) while later, at Venice, he came to be known as "*il Prete genovese*" (the Genoese priest). He was in fact an ecclesiastic, but in 1610 the Pope let him leave the cloister to support his mother, and devote himself entirely to art. From 1614 to 1621, however, he served the Republic of Genoa as harbour-engineer. In 1631, he moved to Venice, where, as a colourist, he became one of the painters who prepared the soil for the last flowering of Venetian art in the work of Piazzetta, Tiepolo, and Guardi during the eighteenth century.

The Vienna picture dates from Strozzi's late, Venetian period. All that is known about its provenance is that it came from Emperor Charles vi's collection, and the earliest surviving reference to it is one of 1733, when it was in the Stallburg gallery.



PLATE 83

JOHANN LISS

*Born c. 1595 near Oldenburg, died 1629-30 at Venice**JUDITH SLAYING HOLOFERNES*Canvas, 126 × 102 cm. ($49\frac{5}{8} \times 40\frac{1}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 2324

It seems that Liss's "Judith" composition enjoyed a remarkable success at Venice, for no less than five autograph versions of it are known, all probably dating from between about 1622 and 1628. The subject was then a very common one in Italian, and particularly in Venetian, painting. Usually, however, Judith was shown as a beautiful, elegant lady, and the sword and head of the slain general were little more than conventional symbols. Thus, indeed, did she appear at about this period in a *tableau vivant* that formed part of a festive procession through Venice. In short, what was new about Liss's work was above all its realism.

All five versions contain the same figure group, but while the first has a broad format, all the others are tall. The most important difference between them, however, lies in the use of colour. Whereas the earliest is characterized by a Caravaggesque "cellar tavern light", which stresses the figures and almost extinguishes the colours with its crude chiaroscuro, in the others the palette gradually lightens until the final, Vienna version presents a colour-scheme of peerless luminosity and splendour.

This purely chromatic evolution, though surprising, is typical of Liss. He probably felt that formal invention was not his strong point, and throughout the whole of his short life he readily drew on other people's compositions for inspiration, both in the Netherlands, where he went from his artistically indigent homeland, and later on in Italy. With regard to the "Judith", a possible prototype for it has been found in a picture now in the Borghese gallery at Rome. However, despite certain points of similarity, its elegance and general attitude are so remote from Liss that at the very most we can only talk of thematic influence.

Out of the forward thrust of the mutilated corpse and the position of its right arm, and Judith's movement into depth and the line of her mantle, there develops a violent whirlpool of motion, which is sustained by the colour. Above it, like a crown, rise the neck and head of the heroine, who glances at us over her shoulder. Brought to exuberant life by the play of light and shadow, her back becomes a kind of resting place for the eye after all the realistic horror below. Judith is no idealized figure, but a woman of flesh and blood, whose pale yellow turban is that of an Oriental Jewess, such as were then to be seen in the Venetian ghetto.

In his *Teutsche Academie* of 1675-79, Joachim von Sandrart wrote the following about his highly gifted friend "Johann Lys (otherwise known as Pan)": "It was his custom to ponder for a long time before beginning his work, but once he had made up his mind, he never strayed from his course. When we were living together in Venice, he often stayed away from the house for two or three days; then he returned by night, quickly set his palette with colours, mixed them as required, and spent the whole night working. Towards daybreak he rested awhile, and then continued his work for another two or three days and nights, almost without sleeping or eating. It did no good when I spoke to him about it, and protested that he was doing himself harm, damaging his health, and shortening his life. On the contrary, he persisted in his adopted ways, staying out goodness knows where for several days and nights until his purse was empty, whereupon he returned to his old habit of making night into day and day into night. So I left him, and went to Rome, whither indeed he had promised to follow me, as soon as the work he had begun was finished; but ill fortune thwarted his intention, for the great plague of 1629 carried off, among others, this unruly Johann von Lys."

The Vienna painting comes from the Gallery's depository, and has only been on show since 1923.

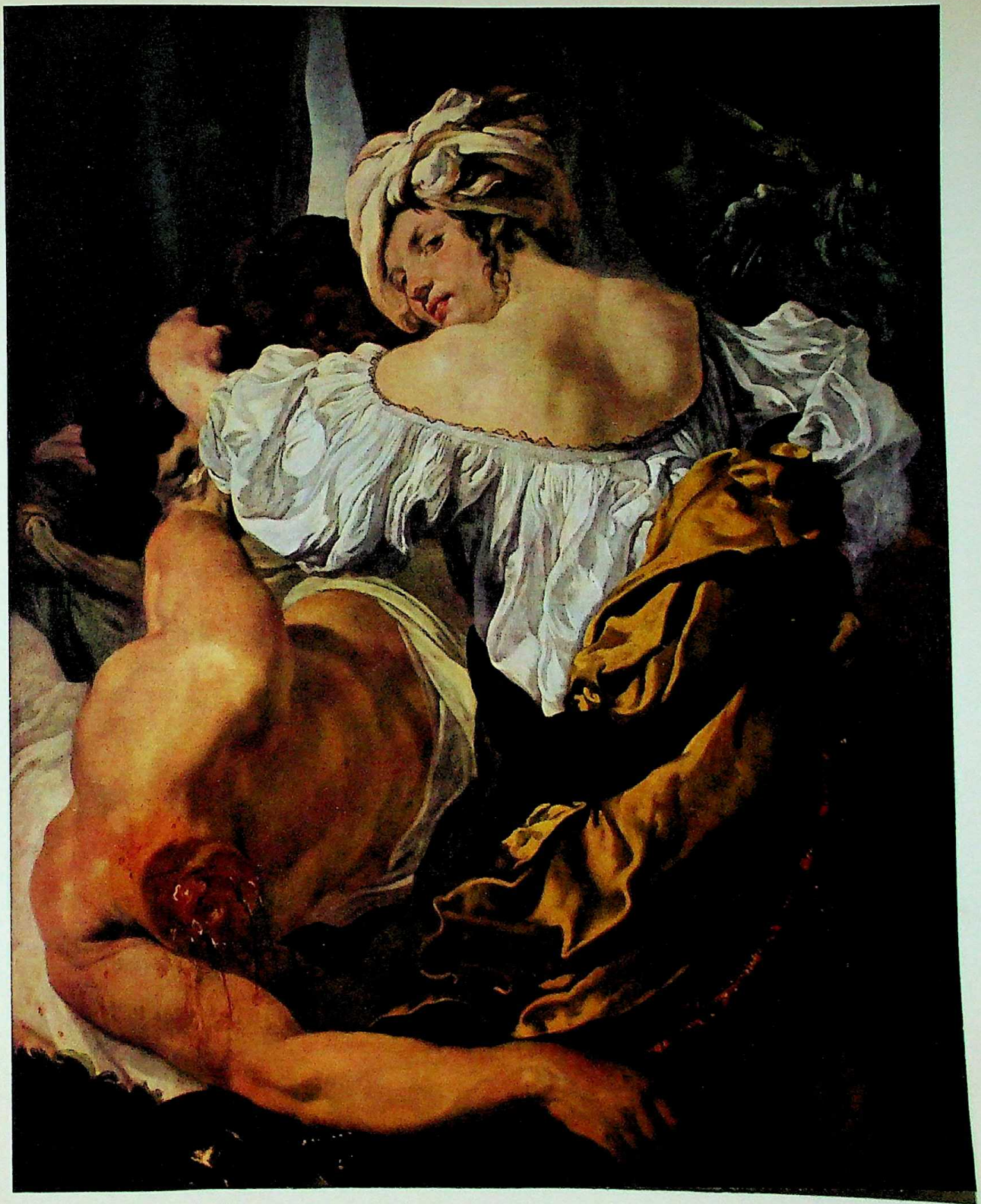


PLATE 84

CAGNACCI (GUIDO CANLASSI)

Born 1601 at S. Arcangelo di Romagna, died 1681 at Vienna

THE SUICIDE OF CLEOPATRA

Oil on canvas, 140 × 159.5 cm. ($45\frac{1}{8} \times 62\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Signed on the arm of the chair. Inv. No. 260

Because of its heroic nature, this subject was a very common one during the era of court art, particularly on the stage. All the more striking, therefore, is the absence of theatrical rhetoric in Cagnacci's presentation of it. The way in which he has advanced the Cleopatra figure so that the spectator feels directly involved in the proceedings suggests the delayed influence of Caravaggio, as does also his scrupulous depiction of the coarsely robust maidservants. Both features are more in the spirit of the great naturalist than that of the Bolognese school, to which, however, as a pupil of Guido Reni (see Plate 81) and epigon of Carracci (see Plate 78), Cagnacci belonged.

His picture is permeated with new and genuine experience; for he had already tackled the subject more than once, and one can see how he only arrived at the calmness and restraint of the Vienna work by way of canonically Baroque expressions of grief through contorted poses and extravagant gestures. Now, agitation and fear are conveyed only by the servants, who look on intently as, a trifle slumped in her chair but perfectly calm, their mistress watches with half-closed eyes the viper's deadly bite. The crown and the purple velvet covering of the seat are merely outward signs of rank; more important are the flawless beauty and cool pallor of the queen's face and body. With each tone taking on an unsurpassable preciseness against the very dark, neutral background, the colour acquires expressive power. Brown and green predominate and mix in the clothes of the servants, harmonizing with their plebeian flesh-tints, whereas Cleopatra's pale skin stands out like ivory above the pure blue and white of her garments. Finally, the contrast between life and death has been given an unmistakable embodiment in the little, wriggling snake, the picture's focal point.

It is not known when Cagnacci, who throughout the latter part of his life was Court Painter at Vienna, executed the work. He may, however, have done so during the sixteen-forties, before being called to Vienna by Ferdinand III (died 1657) or his successor Leopold I. The earliest mention of the canvas is a supplemental entry to the 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm's collection.

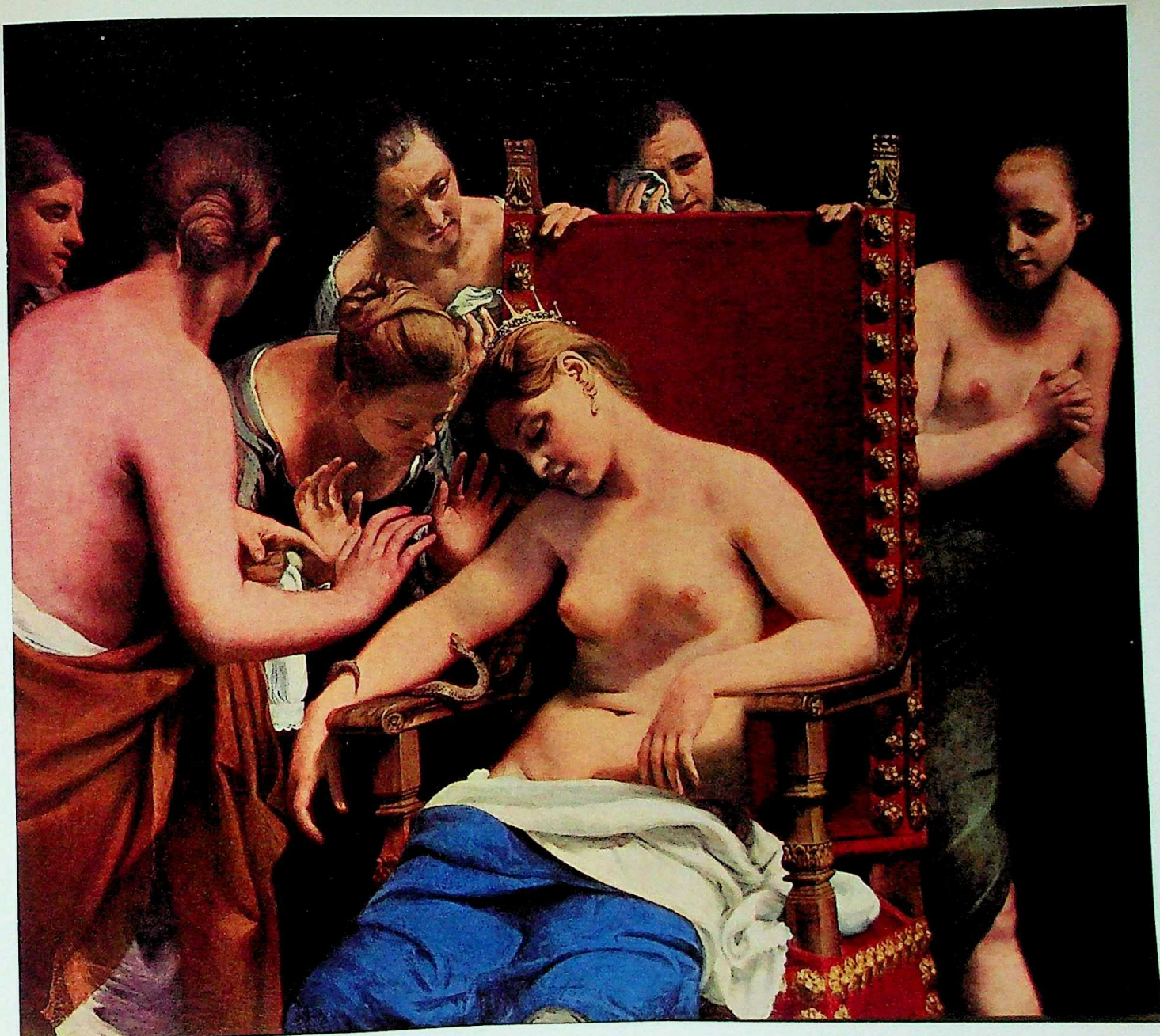


PLATE 85

ABRAHAM JANSSENS

Born 1576 at Antwerp, died there 1632

VENUS AND ADONIS

Oil on canvas, 200 × 240 cm. (78³/₄ × 78¹/₂ in.) Inv. No. 728

Only an artist such as this Antwerp painter (of almost exactly Rubens's age) very clearly was, could have blended Flemish landscape and genre features with an Italian main figure group so perfectly that one must talk, not of imitation, but of elective affinity. Neither the decorative charm of the costume details and fanciful play of the contours, nor the dramatic contrast of the colours detract from the calm grandeur of the lovers' colloquy, the earnestness of their expressions and gestures. Indeed, there is something positively tragic in the way the grouping of the two figures vaguely but inescapably recalls that symbol of the deepest suffering of all: the "Pietà". This echo is made all the more remarkable by the fact that the artist has kept just as close to his Ovidian source as Annibale Carracci (see Plate 78)—though Janssens has chosen the moment of the last conversation, before Adonis gives way again to his fatal passion for the hunt. A deep shadow, which bears no clear relationship to the structure of the tree, looms menacingly behind the goddess, almost as if to stress her plea. Though here the painter may have gone beyond the poet, in other features, such as Venus's Diana-like costume, he has followed him very closely. Exhausted by all the unaccustomed effort, the goddess is glad to rest in the poplar's shade, with the greensward at her feet; the translation of Ovid's text into pictorial terms has resulted in a work of great poetic force.

The tree, the *putti*, and the dogs are all formally as well as symbolically subordinate to Venus and Adonis. Both in their attitudes and their colouring, the hounds have been differentiated: the ginger-coloured one lies wearily, like the erstwhile huntress, whereas the other two, erect, impatiently await their master. Naturally, the *amorini* are associated with Venus, whose hunting equipment—the red quiver and the bow abandoned on the grass—they have come to take away. Like a canopy, the tree spreads its branches over the lovers, here united for the last time, while the torch held by one of the *putti* and the reddening clouds announce the approach of night, and thus intensify the deeply elegiac quality of this great composition.

The picture is referred to in Christian von Mechel's catalogue of the Imperial gallery, published in 1783; but when and whence it entered the gallery is unknown.



PLATE 86

PETER PAUL RUBENS

Born 1577 at Siegen, died 1640 at Antwerp

THE ILDEFONSO ALTARPIECE

Oak, central panel 352×236 cm. ($138\frac{1}{2} \times 92\frac{1}{2}$ in.), wings (inside) 352×109 cm. ($138\frac{1}{2} \times 42$ in.), (outside) 352×115.5 cm. ($138\frac{1}{2} \times 45\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Inv. Nos. 678 and 698

The Vienna Gallery's Rubens collection is among the richest and most important in the world. It includes thirty-six works on display, now rearranged chronologically in two large rooms. They show the artist's development from his fresh, realistic portrait of Francesco IV Gonzaga (1604-5), by way of his great paintings for the Jesuit church at Antwerp (late sixteenth-century), to an array of works from the last ten years of his life. Among these, the so-called Ildefonso Altarpiece undoubtedly stands out as one of the loftiest peaks of Western painting. It was commissioned in 1629 by the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia for the chapel of the Brotherhood of St Ildefonso in Saint-Jacques, Brussels.

St Ildefonso, an abbot who in 657 became bishop of Toledo, was particularly devoted to the Virgin. According to legend, as he entered his church early one Ascension-day, he saw her seated in his own choir-stall, radiant with dazzling supernatural light, while all around a multitude of holy maidens filled the entire building with their song. Mary bade him come near to her, and, "from the treasures of the Son", handed him a celestial robe.

The first painted sketch differs from the finished work in various ways, including the arrangement of the holy women around the Virgin and the relationship between the donors and their patron saints. In this *bozzetto*, Rubens achieved the synthesis of pious tradition, ecstatic vision, and immediate actuality that was so dear to him.

For the final version, the artist reverted to the Gothic tradition, preserved in the Netherlands longer than anywhere else, of the altarpiece with movable wings, which he himself had already used in a new way twenty years earlier. However, this does not make the composition, in its own way, any less unified. With a few modifications, the finished "Vision of St Ildefonso" retains the *bozzetto's* arrangement of diagonals leading the eye into depth, and even enriches it through the grouping of the three little flying angels. The wings, showing the donors with their patron saints now separated from the main scene, act as solid, impressive buttresses to the central panel, and stress the basically symmetrical construction.

In the Vienna Gallery, perhaps only Dürer's "Adoration of the Trinity" can bear comparison with this miracle of colour. Autograph to the last brush-stroke, it has been executed on an oak panel prepared with a white ground, and displays the thin, fluid, transparent paint layer that links the aging Rubens to Pieter Bruegel. The radiantly pure local colour, delicate shading, and "heavenly light" of the central panel are succeeded on the wings by the solemn splendour of the donors' princely apparel. Closed, the wings form a large "Holy Family under the Apple Tree", which is treated as an almost genre-like visit paid to the Virgin and her Child by their relations.

The Ildefonso Altarpiece has had a rather dramatic history. Removed from its rightful place a few months after Rubens's death, it was hung on the wall nearby. In the eighteenth century, the outsides and insides of the wings were sawn apart, so that the two halves of the "Holy Family" could be united and displayed as a separate picture. Though the church was burned down in 1743, the paintings were saved; but as the brotherhood had long been disbanded, the problem then arose of whom they belonged to. Prince Kaunitz, Maria Theresa's chancellor, decided against their forfeiture to the crown, and allowed the church authorities to sell them. In the face of English and Russian competition, they were finally bought for the Imperial gallery in Vienna at the remarkable price of 40,000 guilders.

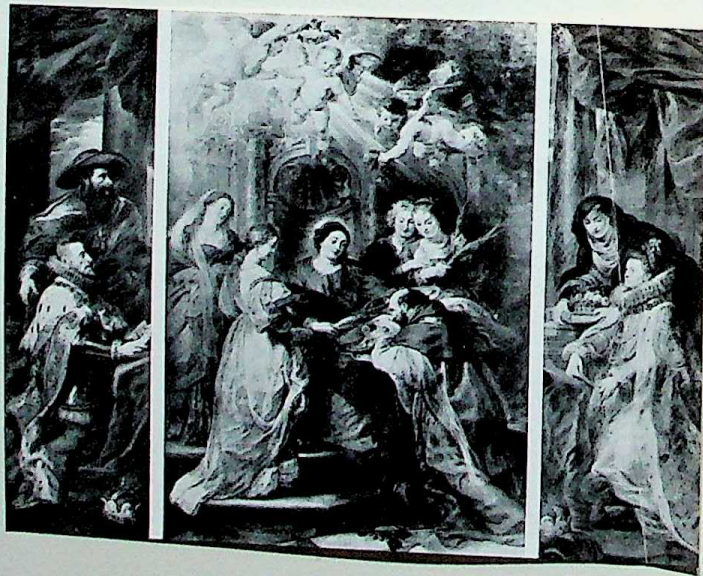




PLATE 87

PETER PAUL RUBENS

Born 1577 at Siegen, died 1640 at Antwerp

LANDSCAPE WITH PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Oak, 147 × 209 cm. (57⁷/₈ × 82¹/₄ in.) Inv. No. 690

Rubens devoted his talents to landscape painting above all during two distinct periods: the sixteen-twenties; and then again after he had acquired, in 1635, his property at Steen, where he liked to spend the summer months. More than any other field of art, landscape was for Rubens a source of purely private enjoyment, an expression of his own personal experience of nature, without regard to the requirements of clients or contracts. When he died, most of these works appeared in his estate.

"The Landscape with the Thunderstorm"—to give the picture its rather weak traditional title—probably belongs to the first period, round about 1625, and it is perhaps the most Baroque and agitated of all the artist's landscapes. It is also the most "heroic", for even in the work of other painters few are to be found that show such a truly cosmic event as this unleashing of the forces of nature by the divine will. A broad belt of appalling yet irresistible destruction sweeps diagonally across the picture. From the weird rainbow above the corpses of the woman and her baby, still held by the rock on to which they have been flung, the eye gradually picks its way amid the signs of devastation. It advances past riven and uprooted trunks, between two of which a bull has been crushed; past men seeking safety, houses already part submerged, gale-lashed tree-tops, a hill town half veiled by the downpour, until it finally reaches the mountains beyond the sloping trees. The raging waters unite, only to divide again; here they flow in broad streams, there they pour down in wild, foaming cataracts. Even a large part of the sky shares in the universal tumult, and menacing clouds, rent by lightning and plenishing the torrents below, match the oblique zone of havoc. Yet in this convulsed nature, there are two areas of peace and calm. On the left, a broad, green, sunny plain spreads out beneath a sky that is still blue; while, on the right, along a gently sloping, sunlit path, the four figures explaining the flood have been arranged against the darkness of the trees: Baucis, Philemon, Mercury, and mighty Jupiter with his thunderbolts. Ovid tells of how, disguised as wayfarers, the two gods sought shelter at a thousand doors, only to be turned away a thousand times. Finally, however, they were warmly welcomed into the hut of the poorest of all, Philemon and Baucis. After a lavish meal lovingly prepared with the gifts of nature, the gods revealed who they really were, and invited their hosts to watch the punishment of their neighbours from the top of a hill.

The imposing conception of this world-wide deluge did not occur to Rubens right away in its entirety. Instead, it grew up while work was actually going on, almost like something in nature, with the result that the artist considerably enlarged his original panel by adding a strip below and then along each side. He followed a similar course with several other landscapes, as well as many pictures of different kinds.

The "Landscape with Philemon and Baucis" was included as number 137 in the inventory of Rubens's estate. Although it is described in the 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm's collection, it does not seem to have been exhibited at the Stallburg. In 1765, it was used to decorate the castle at Pressburg, but was brought back to Vienna in 1781 for the reorganization of the Imperial gallery in the Belvedere.

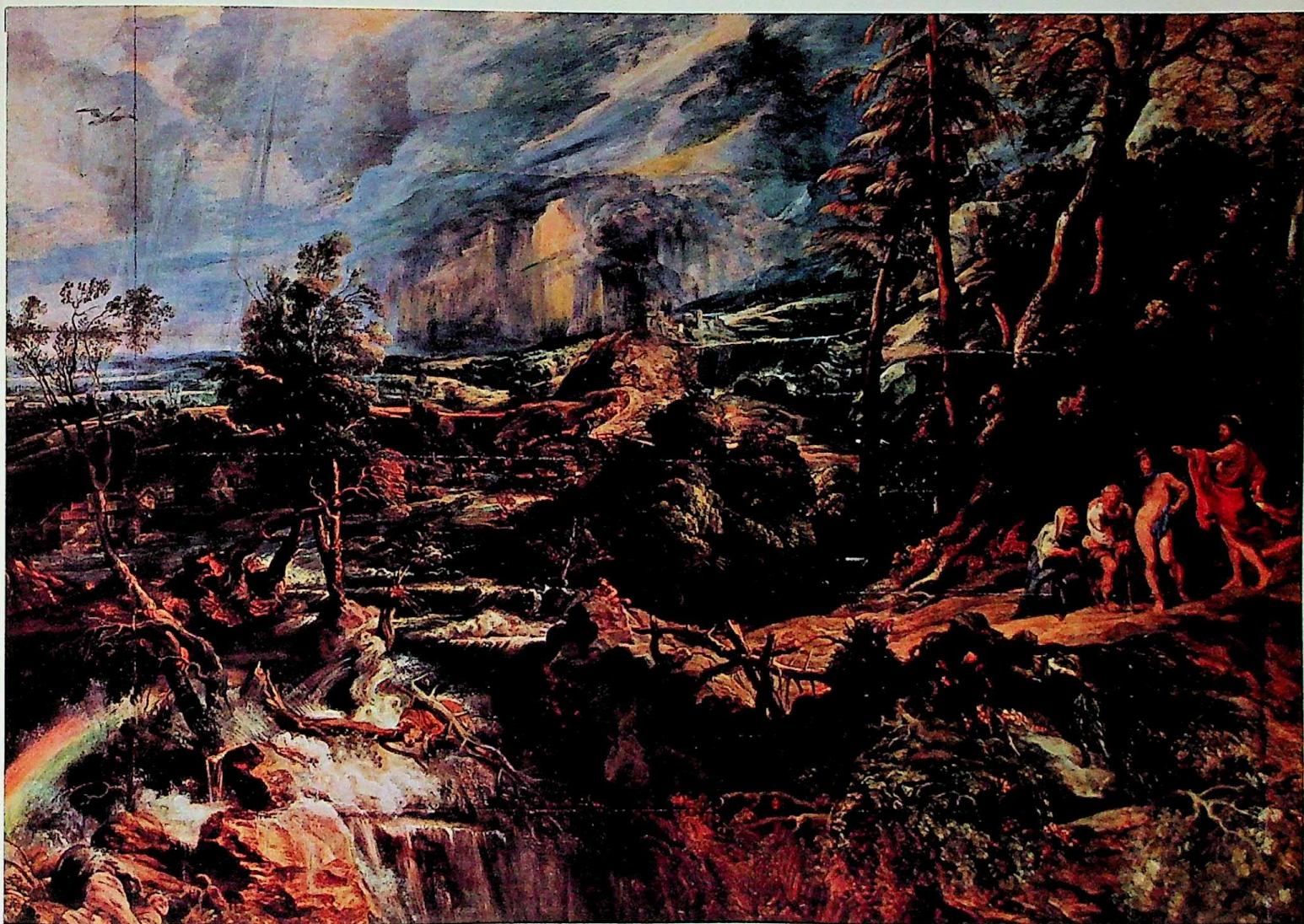


PLATE 88

PETER PAUL RUBENS

Born 1577 at Siegen, died 1640 at Antwerp

THE FEAST OF VENUS

Canvas, 217 × 350 cm. (75³/₈ × 137³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 684

Like the Ildefonso Altarpiece, the "Feast of Venus" was painted by Rubens after the period of his travels and political activity, and his subsequent marriage to Hélène Fourment. Vast energies were now freed and deep impulses awakened, which led to the rich harvest of his later maturity. The present picture again shows the initial idea being developed in the course of work, so that the original canvas becomes quite incapable of containing it. To the central part—with Venus, her "handmaidens", and the dancing *amorini*—the artist had to add a broad strip of canvas on each side and two more at the top.

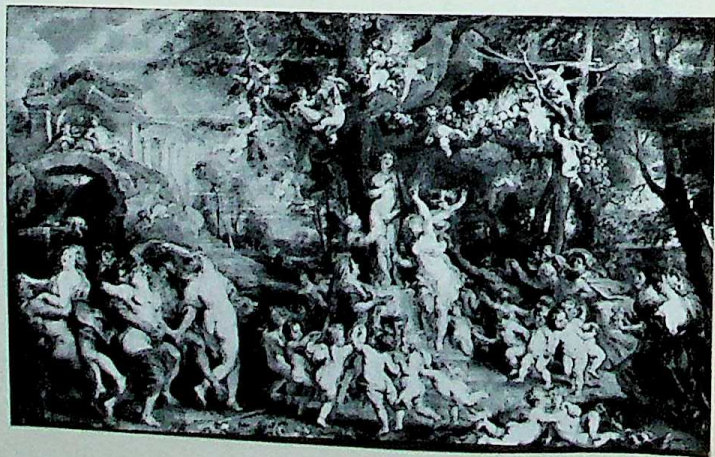
In the group of four women surrounding the Venus statue, the pure and beautiful colour harmonies of the garments unite with the corresponding flesh-tints to form chromatic effects that Rubens had already repeatedly tried out and developed in a number of large works, particularly round about 1615; an example is the Vienna Gallery's "Cimon Finding the Sleeping Iphigenia". The spiral arrangement of these figures around the goddess, which also goes back to an earlier period, is circled in the opposite, clockwise direction by the chain of *amorini*. Introduced by two little figures kissing on the grass (a motif borrowed from sixteenth-century Lombardic art), this incredibly rich outer movement develops turbulently in an endless variety of "steps" as, disappearing and reappearing, it weaves its way among the groups. In the same direction as the last part of the chain, a dark-haired faun followed by two excited-looking nymphs hurries towards the darkness of the grove. This trio may have been added later.

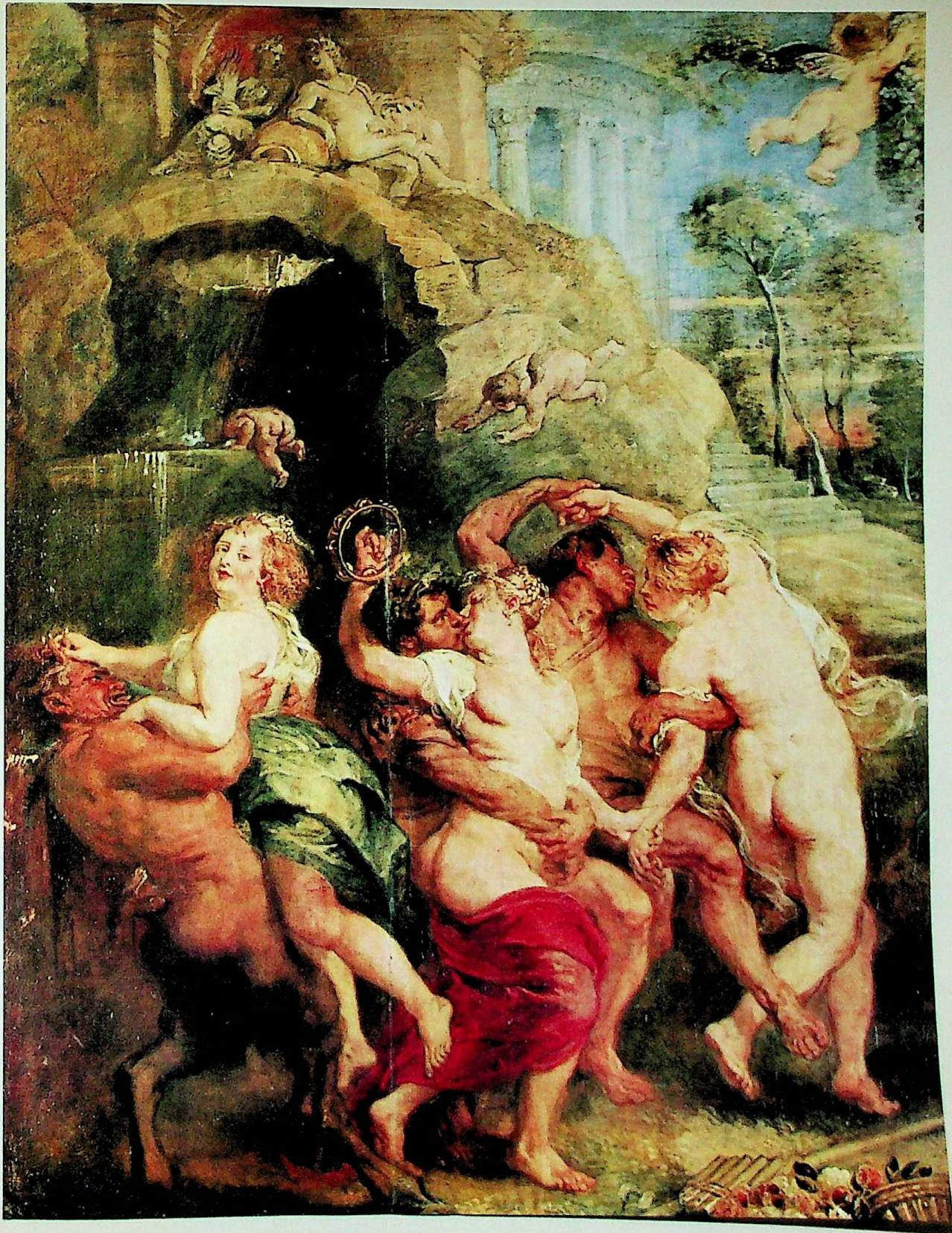
The powerful thrust from the right—strengthened still further by the inclusion of the two girls impetuously advancing to offer the goddess their childhood toys—needed to be balanced. Rubens therefore decided finally (or perhaps before the enlargement at the top) to add on the left the strip with the wonderful fountain, the grotto, and the round temple beyond. In front of the grotto, which can be shown to derive from Antiquity, the painter has called on to his stage three dancing couples as a prelude to, or a kind of paraphrase of, the main scene. It is hard to imagine the original conception of this passage, since, although the group was manifestly composed as a whole, only two of the figures are actually on the extra strip of canvas.

At all events, here the primordial forces of nature erupt in a movement that starts with the dark satyr leaning back under the weight of his beautiful blond partner, continues in the closely clinging central pair, and ends in the curving interlace of the third couple. Though the eye follows this movement almost like a film sequence, one must learn by heart each separate phase of it, in order even approximately to grasp the richness of the rhythm, the complexity of the idea, the intensity of the expression, the concentrated energy of every single detail, and, despite all the violence, the tenderness of the feeling. One must analyse, too, the enchanting colour sequence, which is very different from that of the main group. It will, however, only be fully revealed when the picture is cleaned of its disfiguring layers of varnish and repaint.

Nevertheless, the picture's highest and most distinctive merit is still the way in which unity has been imposed on a composition at once so complex, so packed with formal invention, and so judiciously graded in its realism—a composition that was even enlarged at different periods. From Watteau and Fragonard to Renoir and Monet, generations of artists have found sustenance in this landscape teeming with figures.

How the picture entered the Imperial collection is not known. It was first mentioned in the Prague inventory of 1718 as a picture from Vienna, and shortly after, according to Storffer's painted "inventory" of 1733, it was in the Stallburg.





PLATES 89

PETER PAUL RUBENS

*Born 1577 at Siegen, died 1640 at Antwerp**HÉLÈNE FOURMENT IN A FUR-COAT*Oak, 176 × 83 cm. (69 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 38 in.) Inv. No. 688

This exquisitely beautiful picture is Rubens's most tender compliment to the woman he married in 1630 as a sixteen-year-old, when he was fifty-three. She bore him five children, and filled the last ten years of his life with a happiness revealed by the many portraits and other figures that his love for her inspired him to paint. The work's traditional title—"The Little Fur-coat"—goes back to Rubens's will, in which he left the portrait to his wife, expressly ordering that its value should not be taken into account at the division of his estate. Thereby he implied that it was beyond price. As in his portrait of the Infanta on the Ildefonso Altarpiece, but with even more intense devotion and delight, Rubens has here, from the painterly standpoint, given of his very best. At every hour of the day, and even at dusk, the bare flesh shines with its own incredible inner light. It is possible that Rubens obtained the idea of juxtaposing soft, luminous skin and dark fur from Titian, for he knew Charles I's collection, which probably already contained the great Venetian's "Girl in a Fur", now at Vienna (Inv. No. 89).

A drawing in the Louvre has repeatedly been described as a study for the Rubens portrait. It is an unusually cold, objective representation of Hélène Fourment from life as a seated nude, and has little more in common with the picture than the placing of the head and right arm. Perhaps these two features constitute the germ of the painting, but one cannot here talk of a "study". What the sheet does do is to prove that for Rubens, alongside the reality that could be recorded in a drawing, there existed another, higher kind of truth, which came into being in the finished work of art. Much closer to the Vienna picture is the figure of the Magdalene in the "Virgin and Child with Saints" that, a few days before he died, Rubens ordered to be placed in his funerary chapel in Saint-Jacques at Antwerp.

Yet what a distance separates these rudiments from the painted portrait, with all its vivacity and charm of movement! Lit up by the eyes, the face turns towards the painter, and the whole body twists very slightly with it. In a *contraposto* movement, the right arm reaches up, lifting and framing the full breasts, towards the left shoulder, where the hand rests on the fur. This gesture is in its turn countered by that of the other hand, which holds the coat over the right hip, and, with the white cloth wrapped round the arm, forms the most beautiful passage in the whole picture. The sleeves and corners of the coat and undergarment echo this motion to and from, which dies away in the hovering, suspended action of the feet. Beneath these, the artist has devotedly placed a red carpet, and, by beginning at a short distance from the left side of the picture and then growing stronger in colour against the dark cushion on the right, it suggests the transitory nature of the whole vision.

Not until the work was cleaned a few years ago did it become apparent that Rubens had enlivened his dark background by indicating there a fountain with a lion mask and a sheet of greenish water—but nothing else. For the painter was concerned to keep his artistic imagination clear of any accidental, anecdotal conception.

After passing to the heirs of Rubens's widow, who remarried in 1645 and died in 1673, the picture was bought by the Habsburgs, and thus entered the Imperial collection. The earliest reference to its being there is in Storffer's painted "inventory" of 1730, where it is represented.

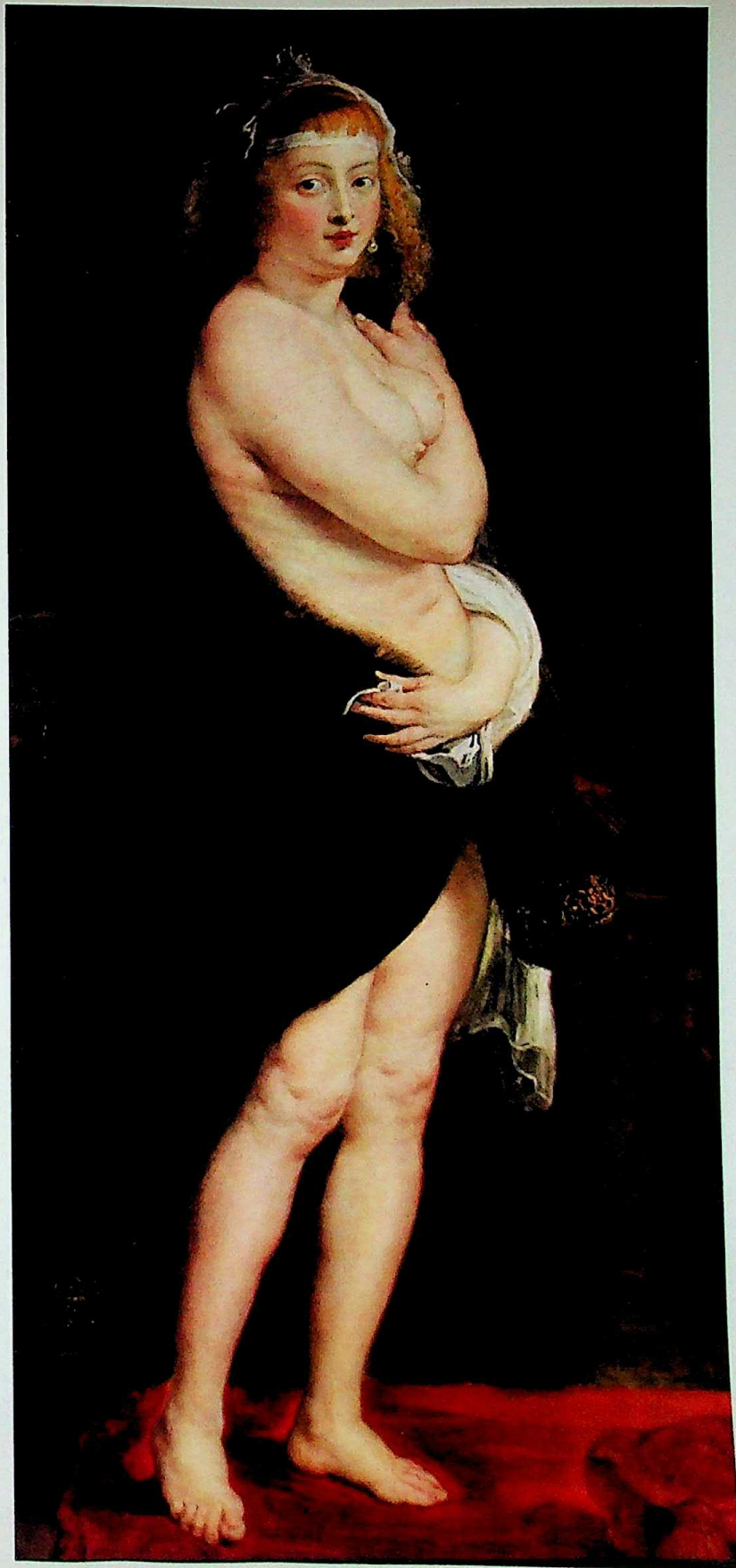


PLATE 90

PETER PAUL RUBENS

Born 1577 at Siegen, died 1640 at Antwerp

SELF-PORTRAIT

Canvas, 109.5 × 85 cm. (43 × 33½ in.) Inv. No. 527

There are very few self-portraits by Rubens—and not just in relation to the rest of his immensely rich *œuvre*. Of the nine that have come down to us, only four are purely self-portraits, as the rest show him doing something together with other people. In three of the most important, he appears beside one of his wives. The first is the early “Rubens with Isabella Brant in the Honeysuckle Bower”, while the other two are late and very late works representing him with Hélène Fourment.

Shortly before his death, the artist depicted himself once again in the portrait now belonging to the Vienna Gallery, for which a drawing exists at the Louvre. Dressed in black, Rubens stands erect beside a column that gleams faintly out of the darkness of the background. His left shoulder is turned towards the spectator, his brow shaded by the broad-brimmed hat, and his face brightly lit above the white frilled collar. While his arthritic left hand rests, bare, upon the hilt of his sword, his right one is gloved and hangs down loosely. This is the last likeness of the now over-sixty-year-old painter, knight, secretary of the Spanish king's Privy Council, and lord of Steen—a man who, though he knew almost every country in Europe, still regretted that he had not travelled more during his youth. Few epitomized contemporary culture as did this statesman who was no less involved in the world politics of his restless age than in the affairs of his native Flanders. Yet, first and foremost, Rubens remained an artist who served a wide circle of the most illustrious patrons of the times, and left behind him a vast pictorial heritage.

The best way of interpreting the message of this face and pose is to confront the portrait with what Rubens himself called the story of his life—a letter of 1634 that he wrote to his old friend the humanist Peiresc in France. He starts off by talking about his important diplomatic missions, and the successes that have given complete satisfaction to the Infanta and the chief ministers of Spain. Then, at the height of favour, “...I made up my mind to restrain myself and cut through these golden fetters of ambition, in order to recover my freedom. A withdrawal like this has, in my opinion, to be started during one's ascent; we must turn away from Fortune while we are in her favour, and not wait until she turns her back on us. Therefore, I took advantage of the opportunity offered by a brief journey to throw myself at the feet of Her Highness (i.e. the Regent) and implore her, as sole reward for all my efforts, to release me from such missions and let me do my duty at home. I obtained this favour with greater difficulty than any other she has granted me... Since then, I have... never regretted making this decision. Now I lead... a quiet life united with my wife and children... and no longer have any other desire in the world than to live in peace. As I still felt unsuited to the continence of celibacy, I resolved to get married... I chose a young woman from a good, but middle-class home, although everyone tried to persuade me to make a match in court circles. But I feared the arrogance that is common among the nobility, especially in the other sex, and hence preferred a wife who would not blush whenever I wanted to take up my brush.”

It is most instructive to compare the self-portrait of this ultra-Flemish artist with the somewhat later one by the intensely Dutch Rembrandt (see Plate 44). Rubens's picture first came to light in the Stallburg gallery in the seventeen-twenties, and is shown in volume one (1720) of the “inventory” that Storffer painted on vellum.



PLATE 91

JACOB JORDAENS

Born 1593 at Antwerp, died there 1678

THE BEAN-KING'S FEAST

Canvas, 242 × 300 cm. (95 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 118 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 786

Here we have a scene of uproarious jollity. The arms flung upwards are themselves like shouts; one does not have to look first at the wide-open mouths. Starting out from the still-life in the foreground on the left, a powerful current of movement rushes through the entire picture, drawing the spectator with it into the hurly-burly of figures. Clearly, such unbridled exuberance amounted to a regional tradition. In 1636, the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, sent his brother Philip IV an account of the *kermis* at Antwerp—particularly the great procession—and concluded it: "When it was all over, the people settled down to eating and drinking, and in the end they were all drunk, for without this no festival is possible here. They really do live here like animals." According to a Flemish custom, the finder of a bean hidden in the Twelfth-cake becomes the king who presides over his chosen courtiers at a crazy meal. This practice provided Jordaens with a subject that he first treated round about 1630, and kept repeating right into old age. Autograph or assisted, there are at least a dozen versions, one of the latest of which is the Vienna picture. It is superior to the others alike in the quality of the painting, the careful balancing of the composition, and the richness of the form and movement. The artist has even taken the trouble to indicate the most important participants and their office by means of little scrolls.

A delightful sense of humour is revealed in the characterization of the dignitaries: the "carver", "doctor", "cook", "musician", or "porter". Yet side by side with these loutish, extravagant figures, there are others whose gestures have a certain grandeur, even solemnity. These include the young "steward" in the foreground, who calls on the others to drink with the king, and the man expertly pouring out wine, whose pose and drapery have a classical metre. With her almost rigid immobility, the "queen" brings to mind the bride in Bruegel's "Peasant Wedding" (see Plate 32). Indeed, one wonders whether the magnificent still-life with the jugs, and the child beside it, may not have been inspired by the same work.

Admittedly, almost a century and a whole world separate the handling of the present work from Bruegel's strong, well-defined local colour and clear-cut forms. Now, as with Caravaggio, it is above all the unreal, magical lighting that stresses or suppresses the figures, unites them in groups, creates depth, and produces a highly picturesque ensemble. Light and colour are in fact the inseparable media of the composition, which contains the giddy movement by means of its strict symmetry. As a bright conflagration of silver, gold, yellow, and red, the light blazes upwards over the still-life, and the blond child and dog, towards the group with the kissing couple, where it achieves its loveliest glow in the girls' red dresses and flushed faces. Towards the right, however, it becomes very bright, yet very cold in the stiffly formal "queen", and only regains a little warmth on reaching the "king".

The picture's firm, imposing structure shows clearly that it belongs to Jordaens's maturity, round about 1655. Since it was already in Leopold Wilhelm's collection in 1656, the Archduke must have bought it straight off the easel. Very likely he commissioned it himself, for it is understandable that he should have wanted a very special version of the subject. Jordaens spared no pains to satisfy his client, and even enlarged the picture at a later date, in Rubens's fashion, by adding strips along all four sides. The brushwork on the attached pieces shows considerable differences from that of the older part, although here and there the freer, more fluid handling extends on to the original canvas. Undoubtedly the moralizing inscription on the cartouche was also included to oblige the Archduke: *NIL SIMILIVS INSANO QVAM EBRIVS* (Nothing is more like a mad-man than a drunk).





PLATE 92

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

Born 1599 at Antwerp, died 1641 in London

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GENERAL IN ARMOUR ADORNED WITH GOLD

Canvas, 115.5 × 104 cm. (45½ × 41⅛ in.) Inv. No. 490

In 1622, Van Dyck left the studio of Rubens, who was by then employing him as one of his chief assistants, and went to Italy, with excellent credentials and sound advice from his master. Just like Rubens twenty years before, the very young, but already mature artist was eager to study the masterpieces of Italian painting, particularly those of Venice, as a sketch-book that he filled during his travels shows. However, no sooner had he arrived at Genoa, his first destination and main base during the following years, than he became the favourite portrait painter of the local aristocracy. A report that at the end of the eighteenth century there were still close upon a hundred of Van Dyck's portraits in Genoese possession bears eloquent witness to the extent of his activity. His adroit, rapid seizing of certain aspects of man, the way he endued his sitters with a gratifying lustre of worldly elegance and privileged aloofness, and the unburdened agility of his brush all help to explain this success.

The Vienna portrait of a young general is one of those that the artist painted during his visit to Italy (1622-27), and it has always been among the favourite pictures of visitors to the Gallery. Besides displaying all Van Dyck's usual merits at this period, it is outstanding for the brilliant rendering of the physical properties of different substances, and for the softly modelled, unassuming face, which is so little bound by time that it still appeals to us today.

Naturally, one would like to know the name of the handsome young man. On the grounds of some very vague conjecture it has been suggested that he may be Ferdinand I Gonzaga, second son of Rubens's patron Vincenzo and from 1612 Duke of Mantua and Monferrato. When the portrait was painted, however, Ferdinand would have been at least thirty-three, whereas its subject could not be much more than twenty. Since his face does not help to identify him, the solution to the problem may lie in the ostentatiously painted armour, which dominates the picture. This armour is all the more interesting as parts of it still survive: a cuirass and helmet in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and two cuisses and a second cuirass in the Armeria at Turin. It was clearly an outfit provided with spare parts for the various requirements of battle and the tournament, and this, together with its luxurious finish, can only indicate an owner of exalted rank. Moreover, experts consider that the burnished armour with its gilded decoration was produced in a Milanese workshop, but the strange thing is that it dates from about 1560—some two generations before the picture. Evidently Van Dyck's client decided to show off in the portrait an old suit from the family armoury, partly, no doubt, because of its uncommon beauty, but perhaps also to honour the hero who had first worn it. This, too, makes it certain that we are dealing with no ordinary general, and suggests one of the ancient north Italian dynasties. Could the presence of the cuirass and cuisses in the former armoury of the house of Savoy at Turin be a clue?

Van Dyck's portrait already formed part of the Stallburg arrangement of the Imperial collection in 1720. It probably reached the court at Vienna directly from Italy.



PLATE 93

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

Born 1599 at Antwerp, died 1641 in London

THE BLESSED HERMANN JOSEPH ADORING THE VIRGIN

Canvas, 160 × 128 cm. (63 × 50³/₈ in.) Inv. No. 488

The Blessed Hermann Joseph, who lived round about 1200, was born at Cologne, and when aged twelve he entered the Premonstratensian monastery at Steinfeld in der Eifel, which belonged to his native diocese. According to legend, he was from childhood onwards extremely devoted to the Virgin and the infant Christ, and composed several prayers to the Madonna, who repeatedly appeared to him.

Very similar worshipping figures occur in other pictures by Van Dyck, but none of them receive the divine grace with the fervour of this monk, who, kneeling amid the congested or flowing folds of his white mantle, seems to be freed from all earthly weight. His head and eloquent gestures express both eager readiness and hesitant restraint. The angel has to hold his right hand lest, through timidity, he withdraws it before the imminent act of grace—though the Virgin is completely certain of her purpose. In a moment, her slender fingers will touch the outstretched palm, and out of fulfilled promise and awed expectation a union will have been symbolically accomplished.

This event forms the heart of the composition, and it is vividly present in the great rectangle that runs down from the Virgin's head, along her arm and that of the monk, up again to his head, and finally through the sloping figure of the angel. Just as the three heads attest the source and goal of the divine emanation, so do the three hands stand for the means of its transmission. An extraordinary tension exists in the interplay of the glances and gestures, which link the heavenly and earthly spheres. These are differentiated by the colour-schemes: on the right, white, golden-yellow, and grey; on the left, the red and blue garments of the Virgin, who, despite her non-central position, is the pivot of the figure group. The column on the high plinth, which clearly stems from Titian's altarpieces, unobtrusively establishes the optical balance without reducing the tension. Chromatically, the assisting angel belongs to both worlds, and it is plain that the three main figures form the basis of the composition. Yet on the far left there appears a fourth, who has no angelic or saintly traits, and whose look and gesture of amazement seem thoroughly human. One can hardly avoid concluding that this figure was added after the artist had finished the picture, or when he did not want to change its already felicitous composition. Moreover, there can be no doubt that Van Dyck himself performed the graft, in view of its great success: the newcomer's gesture, for example, has been delicately attuned to that of the angel's left hand, while his own hand and head form a tilted triangle, behind the Virgin, with the faint gleam of her halo.

It is not surprising that this youthful intruder soon began to fire the imagination of those who looked at the picture, and people have never ceased to wonder whether the figure may not be a self-portrait. On purely external grounds this is possible. The young man appears as an earthly witness to the authenticity of the miracle, which, according to a widespread notion, is the Virgin's mystic marriage to the Blessed Hermann Joseph. However, this does not tally with the legend, and in the picture itself she is clearly just holding out her hand to his. The work was painted in 1629 at Antwerp for the Brotherhood of Bachelors, to which Van Dyck actually belonged. That a member of the brotherhood should have been shown so to speak verifying the miracle seems not unlikely; and the onlooker's features do bear a certain—though not a conclusive—resemblance to those of Van Dyck in his self-portraits from round about this date.

During the same year, the artist painted for the brotherhood another, larger altarpiece, which represents St Rosalia receiving a garland from the infant Christ. It, too, is now at Vienna (Inv. No. 482). Both works belonged in the eighteenth century to the Jesuit Congregation at Antwerp, and, after the suppression of the order, they were bought in 1776 by Maria Theresa. Mechel's catalogue of 1781 mentions them both.

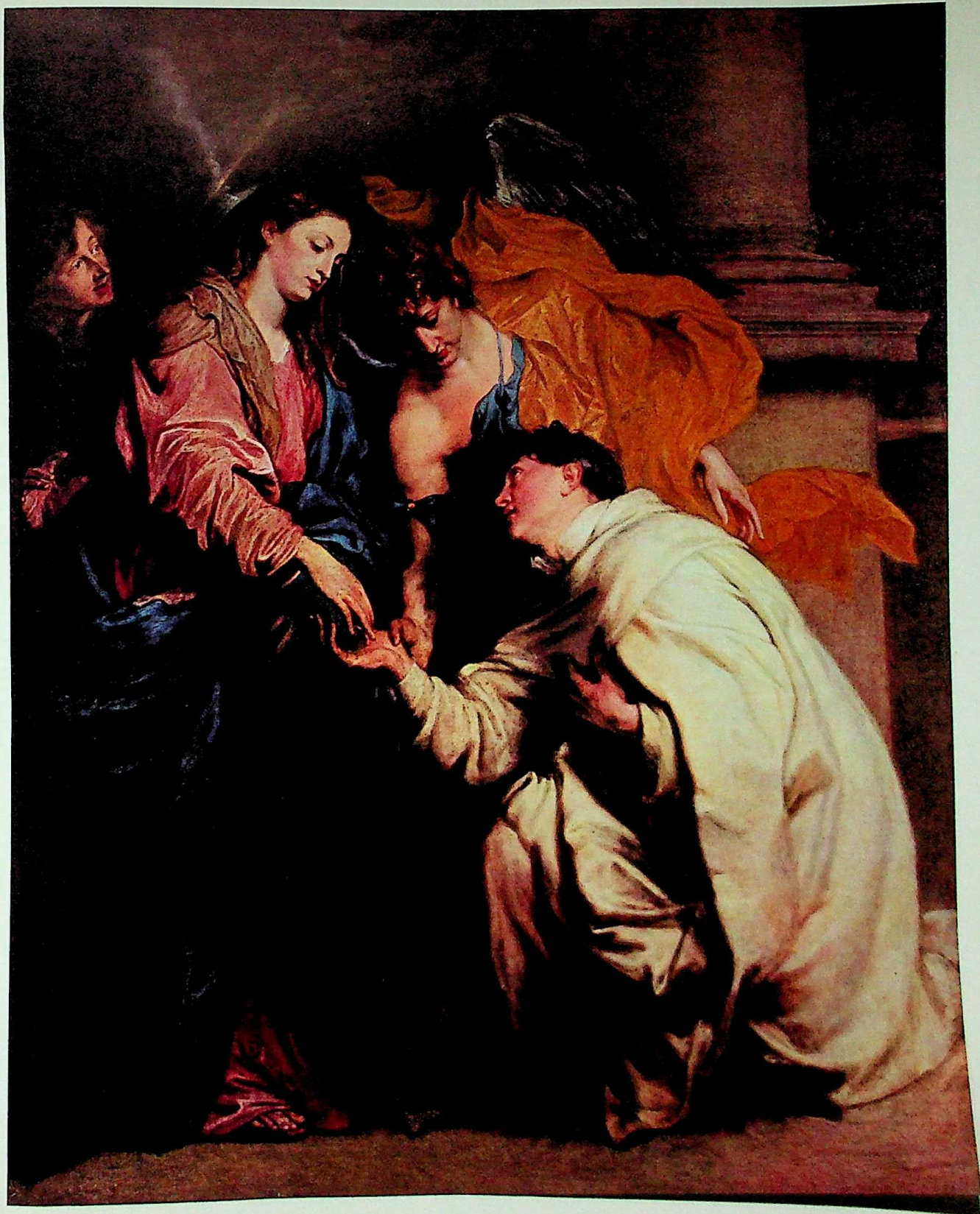


PLATE 94

DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ DE SILVA Y VELÁZQUEZ

Born 1599 at Seville, died 1660 at Madrid

PHILIP IV OF SPAIN

Canvas, 46 × 37.5 cm. (18 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) Inv. No. 324

On the death of Philip III in 1621, the sixteen-year-old Infante of Spain assumed the reins of government with all the idealism, earnestness, and zeal of youth. Fully convinced that he ruled by divine right, Philip IV seemed at first to be the initiator of what would grow into a complete national renaissance. Much youthful energy was then attracted to the court in Madrid, including that of Velázquez, who at twenty-three entered the King's service. His first court appointment was as an usher of the chamber, and after climbing to become marshal of the royal palace and curator of the royal gallery, he was finally honoured by being made a knight of Santiago. Velázquez devoted his art almost exclusively to the royal family, and only left his master's side in order to make two journeys to Italy (1629-31 and 1648-51). During his thirty-seven years of service, he was better placed than anyone to experience directly Spain's irresistible decline as a world power and the dreadful decay within her ruling house.

The Vienna picture dates from the painter's last years, shortly before 1660, as do also a portrait of the King in the National Gallery, London, another at the Prado, and a large number of only partly autograph replicas. Below the high, straight forehead and the curiously soft brows that rise towards the middle, two very dark, blue-black eyes gaze out at us. With the bluish shadow around them and on the temples, the gold of the hair, and above all the intense brick-red of the lips, they provide the only colour in the otherwise pallid face. Yet despite this chromatic reserve and the severe, rectangular outline, there is nothing harsh about Philip's features, which gainsay the proverbial icy aloofness and inscrutability of the King. His majestic bearing and regal elegance did not conceal from the artist—nor do they from us—the human weakness and ambivalence of the extremely subtle personality suggested by the rather tired eyes, the mobile mouth, and even the combination of firm contours with somewhat indistinct modelling.

The picture probably went to the court of Vienna soon after it was painted, perhaps together with the 1659 portraits of the Infante Philip Prosper (see Plate 96) and Infanta Margarita Teresa. Its presence at Vienna cannot, however, be proved until it appeared in the Stallburg gallery during the seventeen-twenties: it appears reduced to an oval in the second volume of Storffer's "inventory" (1730). Undoubtedly, it was at first a rectangle of the same size as the other portraits belonging to its group, which show the King in a considerably larger space, and include both of his shoulders as well as the entire insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

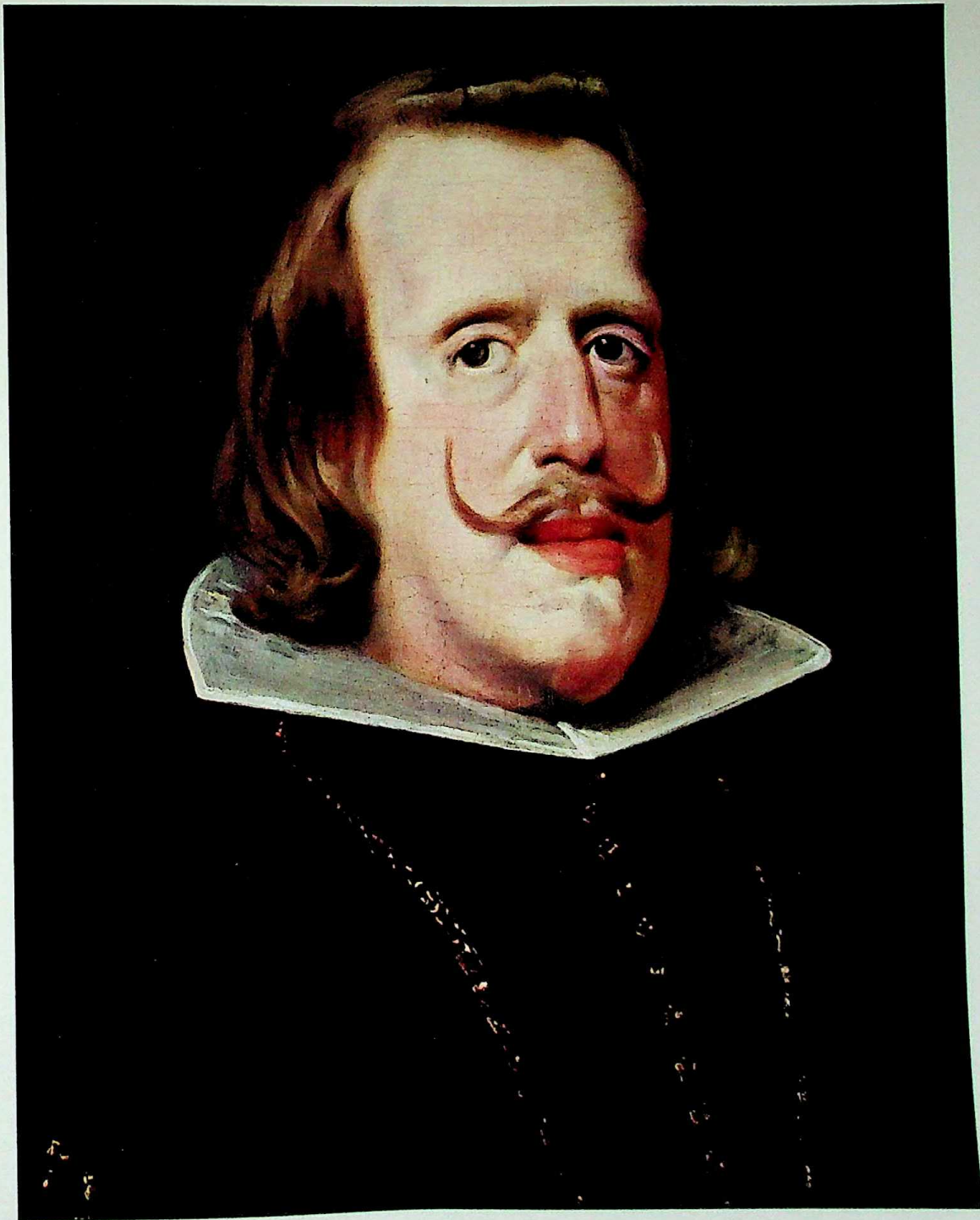


PLATE 95

DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ DE SILVA Y VELÁZQUEZ

Born 1599 at Seville, died 1660 at Madrid

THE INFANTA MARGARITA TERESA IN PINK

Canvas, 128.5 × 100 cm. (50³/₈ × 39³/₈ in.) Inv. No. 321

Philip IV lost his first wife Isabella of Bourbon in 1644, and two years later the sudden death of Balthasar Carlos deprived the King of his only male heir. Round about 1639, Velázquez painted an extremely fine portrait of this prince, who was precociously affianced to Mariana of Austria, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III. The picture, now also in the Vienna Gallery, is based on the colour contrast of black-and-silver and red-and-gold. In 1649, Philip himself entered into a second marriage with Mariana, who, to the great delight of the entire court, bore him a daughter, Margarita Teresa, in 1651. The new Infanta was painted many times by Velázquez, and there are three portraits of her at different ages in the Vienna Gallery alone. At fifteen, she married her uncle, Emperor Leopold I, but died in Vienna when only twenty-two.

The earliest picture of the princess, here reproduced, can be dated to round about 1654, as in it she appears to be roughly three years old. It is generally considered one of the artist's most exquisite infanta portraits, not only for the floral beauty of its subject-matter, which Velázquez has here made his sole interest, but also for the matchless freedom and mastery of the brush-work. A mass of blue, which towards the top takes on a greenish tinge, and a variegated Oriental carpet, in which predominate a brownish-red and a blackish-blue, provide the foil against which the figure of the princess stands out like a flower. In the diagonal that sweeps across the entire picture surface from the bottom left-hand to the top right-hand corner, by way of the sloping side of the child's skirt, these two worlds meet.

As elsewhere, Velázquez has raised the little figure on a kind of pedestal formed by the step discreetly indicated under the carpet in the foreground. By so doing, he has prevented us from "looking down" on the princess, who in fact appears directly before the spectator, her ample skirt spreading out almost horizontally over the carpet. With her right hand resting on the table and her left holding a fan idly at her side, Margarita is standing in the prescribed attitude, as, precociously aware of her dignity, she looks at us with dark eyes set off by her golden hair and delicate, pink-and-white complexion. Why Velázquez appealed so much to the Impressionists can readily be understood from his treatment of the dress, with its silver and salmon brocade, pink bows, and black trimmings, as well as his rendering of the wonderful bunch of flowers in the glass vase. In such paintings by the great Venetians as Titian's late works and those of Tintoretto, which Velázquez admired very highly, it was the force of the expression that led to the freedom of the brush-work. A century later, the Spanish artist was using this free handling solely to enhance the truthfulness and vivacity of his image.

The portrait was probably sent to the Viennese court immediately after Velázquez had finished it, though it did not appear in the Imperial gallery until 1816.

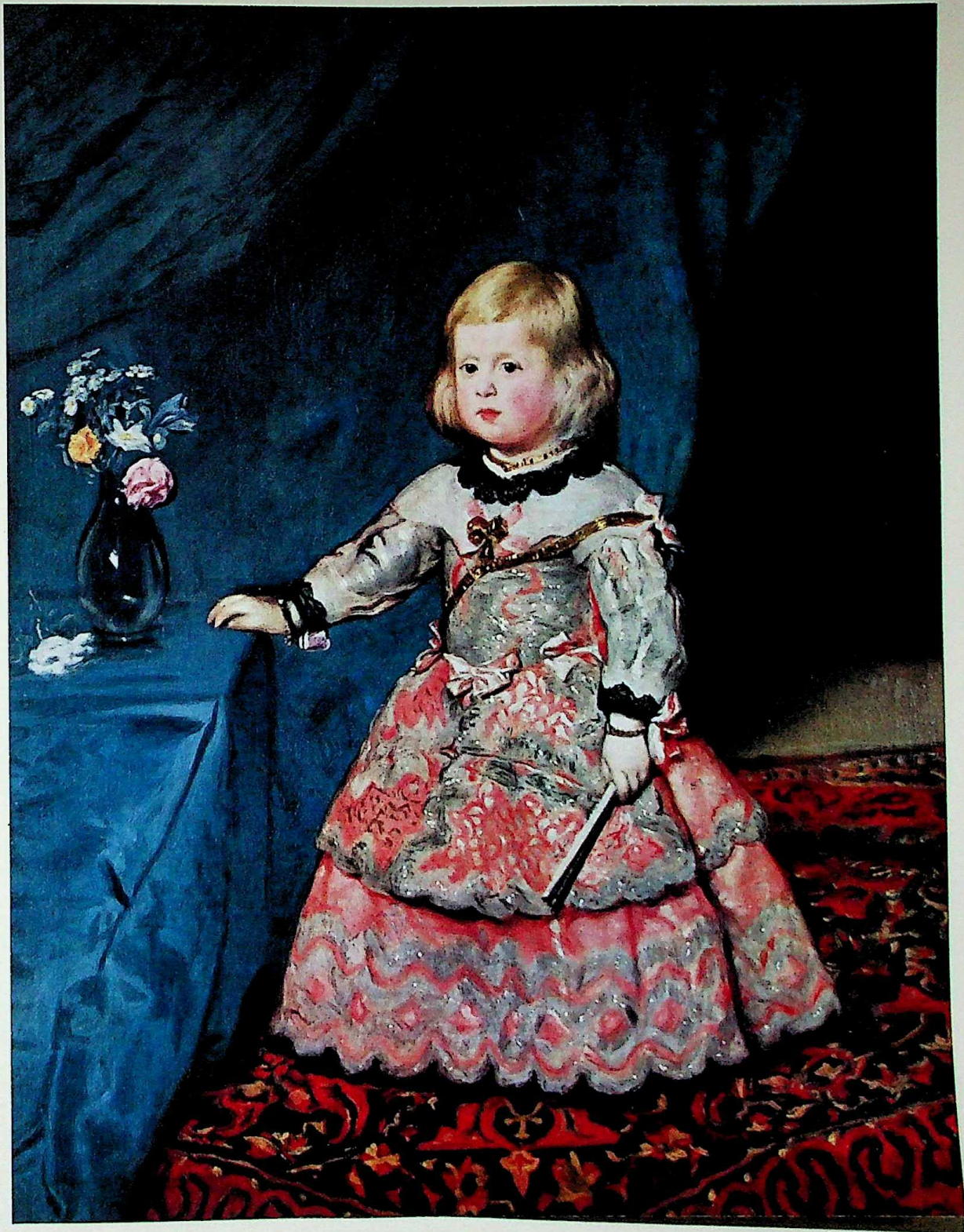


PLATE 96

DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ DE SILVA Y VELÁZQUEZ

Born 1599 at Seville, died 1660 at Madrid

THE INFANTE PHILIP PROSPER

Canvas, 128.5 × 99.5 cm. (50³/₈ × 39¹/₈ in.) Inv. No. 319

In Philip Prosper, and finally in Charles II, the line of the Spanish Habsburgs came to an end. Philip was born in 1657, and though described at first as a lovely baby, he turned out frail and sickly, dying before he had reached the age of four. The sombre political back-drop before which this inbred creature languished was provided by Spain's hopeless and exhausting struggle against foes on all sides, but especially against her hereditary enemy, France. After prolonged negotiations with Louis XIV, the contest was brought to a temporary close by the, for Spain, humiliating Peace of the Pyrenees, and the meeting between the two kings on the Isle of Pheasants in the summer of 1660. Velázquez preceded Philip as royal courier, only a few months after painting this unique portrait of his master's son; and hardly had he returned to Madrid, when on August 6, 1660, he died.

Thus, the picture of the Infante, who was then not yet two, belongs among the artist's last works, and it is undoubtedly the most deeply felt and most deeply moving of his child portraits. All his feeling and knowledge have here been transmuted into art of the clearest and purest quality. Chromatically, the work is an ingenious orchestration of reds and white. The impressive wine-red, inclining to purple, of the curtain on the left gives way, except here and there, to a more sober, brownish-red in the chair on which lies the little white dog. Even browner and still more subdued is the red of the carpet with its great patches of colour; but the wine-red of the curtain reappears in the cushion and the child's hat on the table to the right, while beyond it in the background glows the deep, rich red of a second curtain. In these solemn, musty surroundings appears the infant prince and heir to the throne, with his blond hair and pale, diaphanous little face, which, for all its "dignity", bears a look of immense loneliness. It is as though Velázquez had had a premonition of the child's approaching death, which all the protective amulets that had been hung about him would not avert. The profusion of silent, empty space behind him adds to the melancholy atmosphere, which concentrates in the sad, delicate features of the little white dog. How far we are from the symbol of regal might in Seisenegger's portrait of Charles V (see Plate 26)! Only in Spain, where a hundred years earlier Sánchez Coello had already dared to paint the Infante Don Carlos in all his spiritual and physical degeneracy, could such a beautiful picture comment so frankly on the bleak despondency of the times.

The portrait was commissioned in 1659, together with the one of Margarita Teresa in blue (Inv. No. 2130), and it is known that Philip made an immediate present of them to the court of Vienna—obviously to calm and reassure his relatives. Even though circumstances had forced him to accept the engagement of his elder daughter, Maria Teresa, to the King of France, the succession was now assured by Philip Prosper, and the dangers ensuing from a French marriage averted. Moreover, here was the little Margarita Teresa available for other matrimonial arrangements with the house of Austria. Where the two paintings were kept at Vienna is not known. Round about the middle of the eighteenth century, the one of the prince appeared in the treasury of the Imperial castle at Graz. When this was evacuated under Maria Theresa, the portrait was transferred to Vienna in 1765, and it has been on exhibition since 1816.



PLATE 97

HYACINTHE RIGAUD (REAL SURNAME RIGAU Y ROS)

Born 1659 at Perpignan, died 1743 at Paris

COUNT PHILIPP LUDWIG WENZEL SINZENDORF

Canvas, 166 × 132 cm. (65³/₈ × 52 in.) Inv. No. 9010

Rigaud's portrait shows Count Sinzendorf in the vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece: velvet undergarment and mantle, the latter lined with white satin (the letters in the gold-embroidery along the border repeat Charles the Bold's motto: *Je l'ay emprins*); satin cap, also gold-embroidered; and collar with the order's badge. The majestic pose of this *grand seigneur* is fully in keeping with the richness of his attire and the choiceness of the colour harmony. On the socle beneath the cap, Sinzendorf's coat of arms appears in relief with his motto: AGITAT . CLARESCIT.

For dating the picture, we have a *terminus a quo* in the fact that the Grand Master of the order, Emperor Charles VI, conferred the Golden Fleece on the Count at the beginning of 1712. Not long after, Rigaud painted a half-length portrait of him at Paris, again wearing the insignia of the order. Today, it is only known through an engraving dated 1713 by B. Picart, but it was completely different from the one at Vienna. This, too, was copied, and a print by L. Drevet reproduces it accurately though in reverse. The long Latin inscription accompanying Drevet's engraving gives a list of the Count's name, titles, and possessions, and actually states that the portrait was executed in 1728 while Sinzendorf, then aged fifty-seven, was at Soissons for the peace negotiations there. After long months of discussion, the congress—which the Count, as the chief Imperial representative, had opened with a solemn speech—broke up in 1729, putting an end to the Emperor's dreams of world trade.

No doubt according to the Count's wishes and perhaps even following his express instructions, the portrait conforms to the type that Rigaud developed with variations for depicting monarchs, aristocrats, and potentates in general from the painting he executed in 1701 of Louis XVI. This shows him resplendent in his ceremonial robes, and it has established the image of *le Roi Soleil* for all posterity. Rigaud's is a theatrical way of representing supreme majesty, and corresponds perfectly to the theory of the divine right of kings.

With appropriate modifications and changes, the Sinzendorf portrait presents the same *mise en scène*. Cut off at the knees and hence closer to the spectator, the figure is less unapproachable than that of the King, but its cool gaze passes over and beyond all comers, thereby maintaining a well-calculated distance. Though not a successful diplomat, the Count felt that he was one of the great, and so he appeared to his contemporaries. An inscription, certainly approved by him, on another of his portraits describes him as: "Philip Ludewig, Hereditary Treasurer of the Holy Roman Empire and Count of Sinzendorf. Privy Counsellor and Colonel of His Imperial and Catholic Majesty: Court Chancellor."

Rigaud arrived at his own style by way of a free imitation of Van Dyck's portraits. Perfectly adapted to court requirements, it provides a sympathetic embodiment of the spirit and vitality of the age dominated by the great absolute monarchy. After portraying the Duke of Orleans, the future Louis XV, in 1687, Rigaud had soon advanced so far along the road of success that he was receiving an uninterrupted flow of commissions from the highest circles in France, and then in the whole of Europe. Thanks to him, the Academy finally granted portraiture the artistic status previously reserved for religious, allegorical, mythological, and historical painting.

At the period of the Sinzendorf portrait, the famous society painter had long only been able to fulfil his innumerable commissions with the aid of a well-organized studio. Nevertheless, the Vienna work shows such refinement of handling that it must surely be entirely autograph. It was presented to the Gallery in 1948 by Baroness Clarisse de Rothschild in memory of her late husband Alphonse.



PLATE 98

BERNADO BELLOTTO (CALLED CANALETTO)

Born 1720 at Venice, died 1780 at Warsaw

VIENNA FROM THE BELVEDERE

Canvas, 135 × 213 cm. ($53\frac{1}{8} \times 84\frac{5}{8}$ in.) Inv. No. 1669

The view of Vienna from the terrace or windows of the Upper Belvedere Palace is one of the most characteristic, even today. Looking northwards, the city appears at its best against the heights of the Wienerwald—in the middle, one can see its spurs, the Kahlenberg and Leopoldsberg—and, set back beyond the perspective of the Belvedere garden and Schwarzenberg park, the panoramic silhouette of the city's architecture is impressive. In painting this picture, Bellotto was paying homage to the new Vienna of his times, to the magnificent Baroque developments that began after 1683, when Vienna and the whole of the West were finally liberated from the Turkish peril. The court, the nobility, and the clergy all vied with one another in their building activities—as Bellotto's painting convincingly shows.

Massively overtopped by St Stephen's Cathedral, the medieval city was then still enclosed within its walls. On the left rises the dome of the Karlskirche, erected by the Emperor in fulfilment of a vow, while on the right can be seen the Salesian convent, likewise dominated by the dome of its church. In between appear, from right to left, the Lower Belvedere, intended by Prince Eugène as a summer residence; the Orangerie belonging to it, with its own little garden; and the Schwarzenberg Palace, of which the park runs parallel to the one between the two Belvederes. All these buildings and gardens date from the first forty years of the eighteenth century, and were created by the outstanding masters of Austrian Baroque architecture: Fischer von Erlach built the Karlskirche, Lucas von Hildebrandt the palaces, Allio the Salesian convent. The way in which the two imposing Baroque domes flank, at a respectful distance, the soaring Gothic steeple of St Stephen's is most impressive.

With the development of the new *veduta* painting, which aimed at the most scrupulous exactness, it is not surprising that the choice of the subject became increasingly important. For though people did indeed want a realistic representation, they also required it to be dignified, noble, and beautiful. The view of Vienna from the Belvedere must thus have been regarded as an ideal occasion for a *veduta*, and Bellotto executed it with all the requisite precision—as was guaranteed by his training at Venice under his uncle Antonio Canal, from whom he took his sobriquet. Antonio is credited with being the first to have used a *camera obscura* to help him paint these views, and his nephew certainly did so too, installing it for the present work in the pavilion at the north-west corner of the palace. Despite its slightly too mechanical execution, the minutely accurate Vienna *veduta* has remarkable charm, and there is something positively poetic about the way in which the late-afternoon light has been used to combine all the details in a highly atmospheric whole.

Bellotto painted this and many other views of Vienna and of the neighbouring palaces during 1759–60. He probably came to Austria when the Seven Years War compelled him to flee from Dresden, and leave his well-paid job as Court Painter there. Once at Vienna, however, he was commissioned to paint a number of views by Maria Theresa, who had bought the Belvedere Palaces in 1752 from Prince Eugène's niece. Since Liechtenstein and Kaunitz patronized the artist too, the pictures that he left behind him provide our most important evidence of how the city and its immediate surroundings looked during the Empress's reign. Artistically, they are also the most valuable eighteenth-century views of Vienna, as Bellotto was more gifted than the engravers Pfeffel and Kleiner, who portrayed the city under Charles VI, or Schütz, Ziegler, and Jansch, who recorded it under Joseph II.

Today, there are thirteen *vedute* by Bellotto in the Vienna Gallery. All came from the court, and eleven of them, including the present one, were mentioned in 1822 as being at the Laxenburg Palace. Later, they decorated the state apartments of the Hofburg at Vienna, and from there were transferred in 1890 to the newly built museum on the Maria Theresien-Platz.

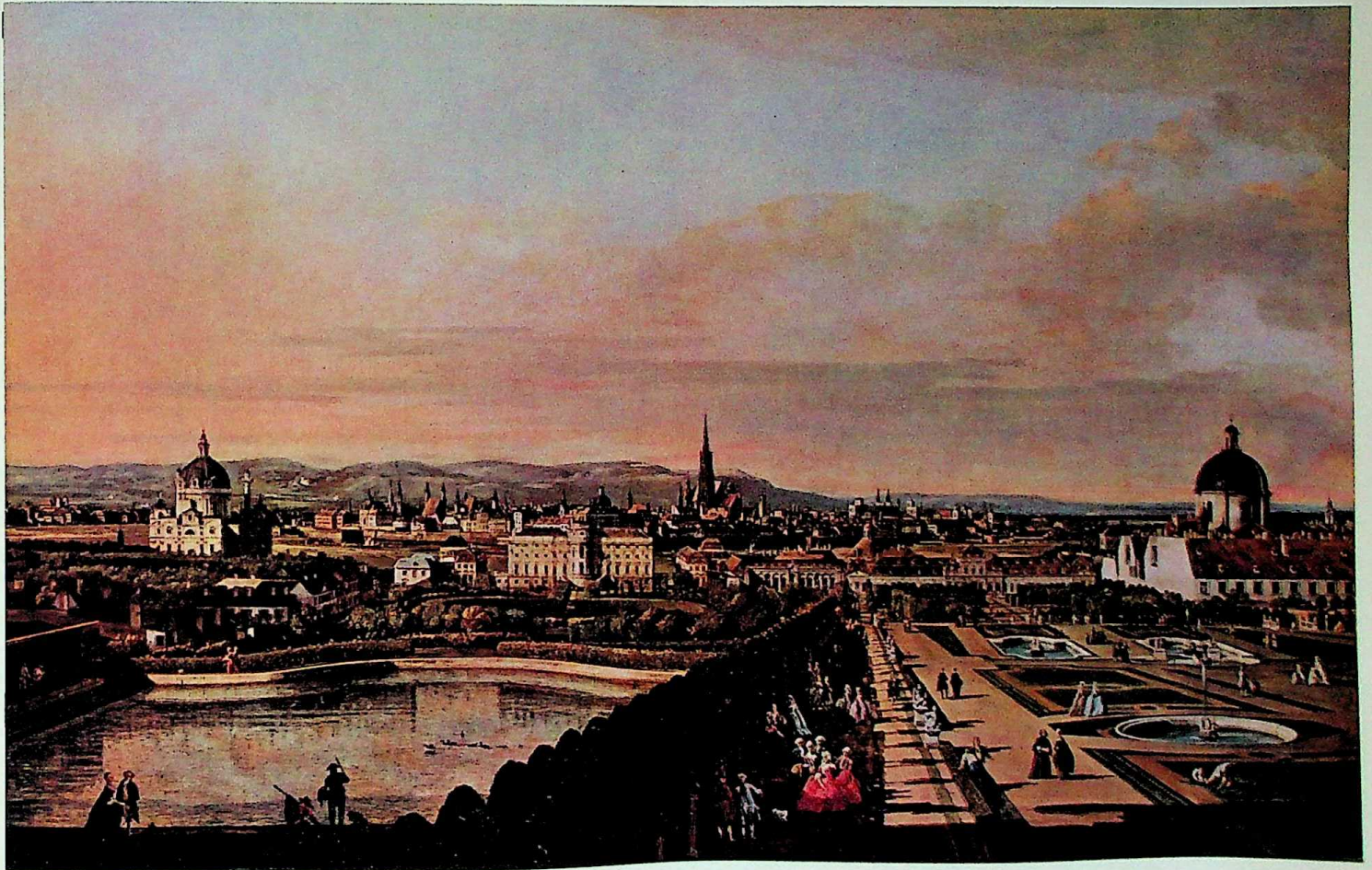


PLATE 99

FRANCESCO GUARDI

Born 1712 at Venice, died there 1793

PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENICE

Canvas, 29.5 × 45 cm. (11⁵/₈ × 17³/₄ in.) Inv. No. 6233

Baron von Pöllnitz, one of the great eighteenth-century adventurers, wrote the following in his *Mémoires*, of 1734: "St Mark's Square is the habitual meeting-place of all the respectable people in Venice. Here the nobles have their rendezvous, and only leave it to go to bed; they spend their life gaming in the cafés, and in the barbers' shops." The piazza was also even at that date the rallying-point of numerous foreigners making the customary grand tour, and every gentleman who enjoyed music, the theatre, and good company had perforce to visit the city. In short, Venice was then the playground of Europe. People went there especially for Ascension Day, the chief festival of the maritime Republic, when one could admire the famous *Bucentaur* with the Doge on board, setting out to renew his marriage with the sea. During the same day, there opened on Piazza San Marco the so-called "Festa della Sensa", which in the eighteenth century was really just a prolongation of the carnival, and lasted a week. For the occasion, special arcades and pavilions were erected to provide trading facilities. In 1776, Maccaruzzi created a new kind of decoration for the festival, which took the form of richly ornate wooden architecture, crowned with vases and statues. It was rebuilt every year right up to the end of the Republic in 1797.

The piazza appears adorned with Maccaruzzi's constructions in Guardi's picture of it, which most probably acclaims the sensational novelty of these decorations, and would therefore appear to have been painted in, or shortly after, 1776. Looking westward from the cathedral, one sees the little church that was later demolished under Napoleon. Though completely accurate and clear, this *veduta* is unmistakably different from those of Antonio Canal, who none-the-less had a strong influence on Guardi. Instead, however, of a precise, factual representation of the architecture, the younger artist preferred the magic of colour, its modification by light and shade, and its atmospheric inflections. Consequently, he has of late been extolled as a precursor of the Impressionists—which is true only in a very limited sense. For, in Venetian painting, the dissolution of form to which he also applied his talents had already become a tradition reaching back to the last years of Titian (see Plate 58). Moreover, far from being an innovator, Guardi even owed the brightness of his palette to the influence of other contemporary Venetian artists, particularly Piazzetta and Longhi. He was indeed a true, impassioned colourist; but instead of being that of a "chance" impression, his colour is the fruit of sensitive deliberation, and stems from the hyper-refined taste of Rococo art.

In the Vienna picture, the masterly treatment of the morning light is specially convincing. Reaching out across the piazza, the deep shadow of the campanile entirely shrouds the structure on the left, and splits the decoration on the right into sharply contrasting strips of light and darkness. By doing so, it turns the foreground into a kind of proscenium cut off from the more distant part of the square. The little figures, in their gorgeous and variously coloured clothing, link the two zones together, and animate the whole with a gently fluctuating movement. Almost half the canvas has been devoted to the sky, to its patch of thin haze and tuft of white cloud against a clear blue. There is something rather whimsical about the inclusion of another small touch of white immediately below but in the foreground, where the two dogs are getting to know each other.

The Vienna Gallery also owns a view by Guardi of the arsenal at Venice (Inv. No. 6234), which forms a pendant to the present work. Both pictures were bought on the art market in 1912.

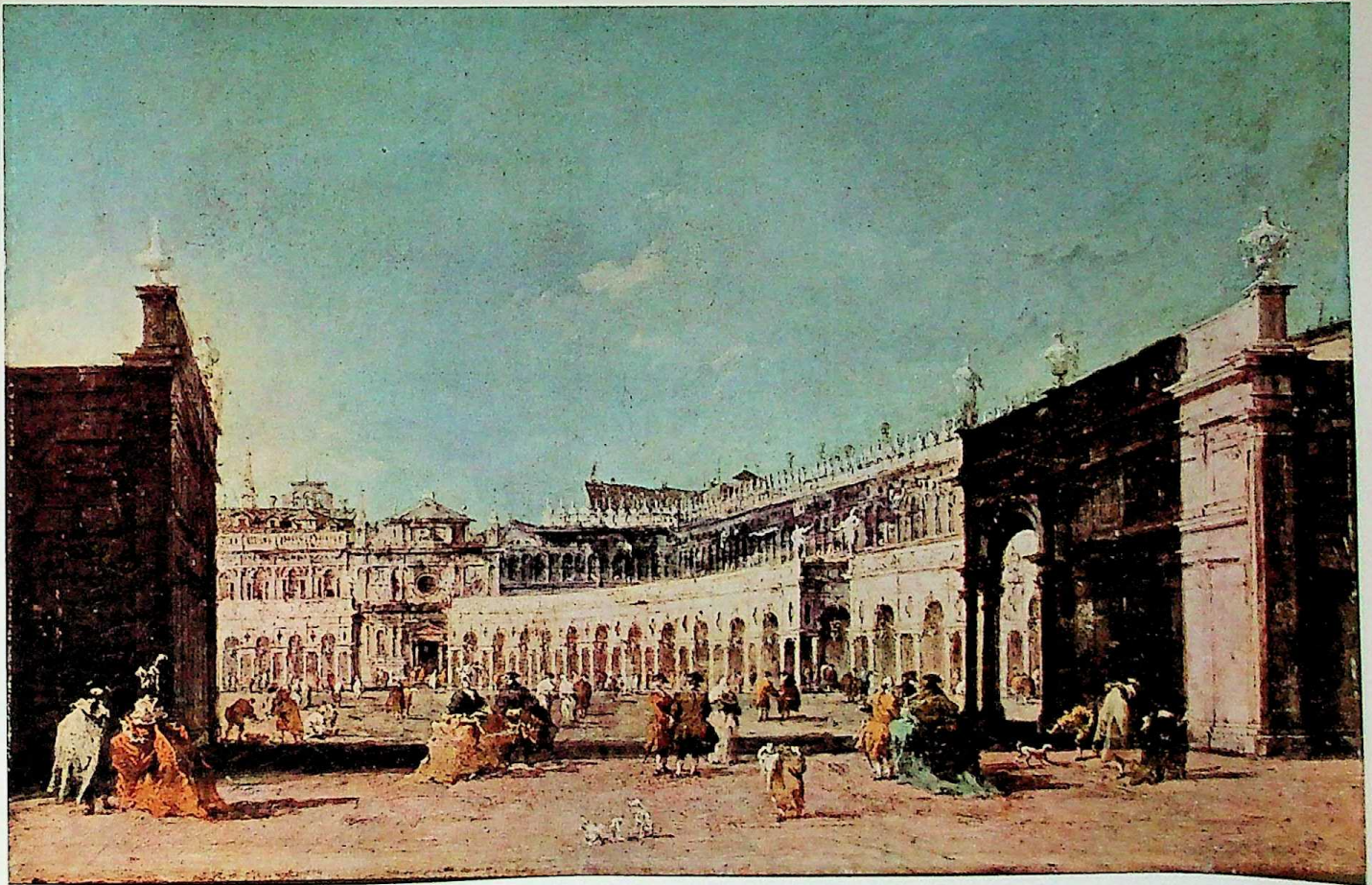


PLATE 100

JOSÈPHE-SIFRÈDE DUPLESSIS

Born 1725 at Carpentras, died 1802 at Versailles

THE COMPOSER CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD VON GLUCK

Canvas, 99.5 × 80.5 cm. (39¹/₈ × 31¹/₂ in.) Signed and dated: J. S. Duplessis pinx. paris 1775. Inv. No. 1795

Generally acknowledged to be the "standard" portrait of Gluck, this likeness of the famous composer seated at the harpsichord is the one that most vividly reveals his brilliant personality. Gluck himself must have prized it highly, as he is known to have had at least two copies made.

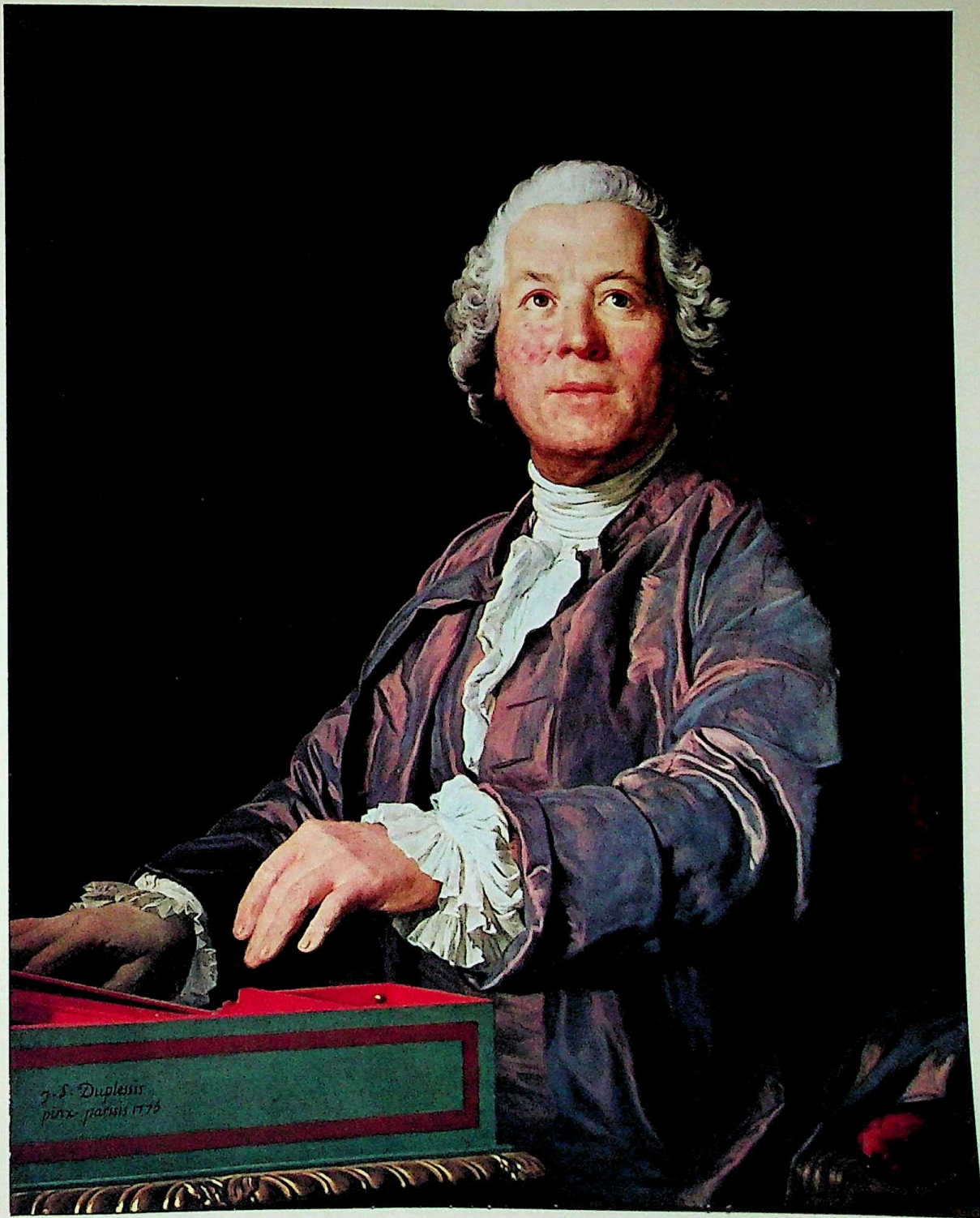
When he sat for it, he was aged sixty, and at the height of his Paris success. Clearly conscious of his aim in life, he had left Vienna in order to conquer the French capital. Though the unadventurous Gallic attachment to the grand tradition in opera presented him with enormous difficulties, he managed to win the public round to his revolutionary work, thanks to his own energy and the help of able and influential supporters. The performance of his *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the Paris Opera-house on April 17, 1774, was one of the most important events in the history of modern music; and in August of the same year his *Orpheus and Euridice*, revised and with the libretto translated into French, had an even greater success. How far reaching the effect of the Paris triumph was can best be judged from the fact that in October Gluck was appointed Court Composer at Vienna. In Paris, he naturally found himself at the centre of the fashionable world, fêted, courted, and besieged—not least by painters and sculptors wanting to execute his portrait. He must have posed in 1774 for Duplessis, who only finished and signed the picture now at Vienna during the following year.

Duplessis also reached the peak of his success at this period. In 1774, two much admired portraits gained him entry to the Académie; and when he received permission to paint Gluck's patroness, the Dauphin's wife Marie Antoinette, a career was opened up to him as portraitist of the court and aristocracy. He later also depicted Louis XVI, who appointed him Painter to the King. Then his star began to set: after illness, poverty overtook him, as it did, during the Revolution, so many others who had been closely associated with the court. Yet in his palmy days, he was considered the outstanding Paris portrait painter, and Diderot even called him the French Van Dyck.

We know that Duplessis took great pains over his portrait of Gluck. Besides the canvas now at Vienna, there are no less than six drafts in red chalk, pastel, and oil. Only one of these corresponds even approximately to the final version, which was exhibited with great success at the Salon of 1775; the others show how Duplessis found his way into the personality of his sitter. Contemporary critics approved the suitable *mise en scène* of the Vienna picture, though it was also thought that the composer would have looked more picturesque with his head bare or covered by a kerchief than wearing elegant clothes and a wig. Here one recognizes the clash of different outlooks corresponding to different periods. Be this as it may, there is perhaps no more convincing likeness of a musician anywhere.

Attention has been concentrated on the left hand and the head, which, with its pockmarks and wide-set eyes, is not a handsome one. Yet the upward gaze reveals a depth of emotion and enthusiasm that ennoble and transfigure the whole face. Gluck really does have "heaven in his eye", as a later admirer was to put it. Poised over the keyboard, the left hand, like the face, is bathed in the strong light coming from above; this is the moment of divine inspiration.

There is an uncorroborated report that, when Gluck died, his widow presented the portrait to the Viennese court. She may have done so in gratitude for the honorarium bestowed by Maria Theresa on the composer within a very short time of the great success of his *Iphigenia* at Paris. All that we know for certain, however, is that the picture entered the Gallery in 1824, almost twenty-five years after the widow's death.





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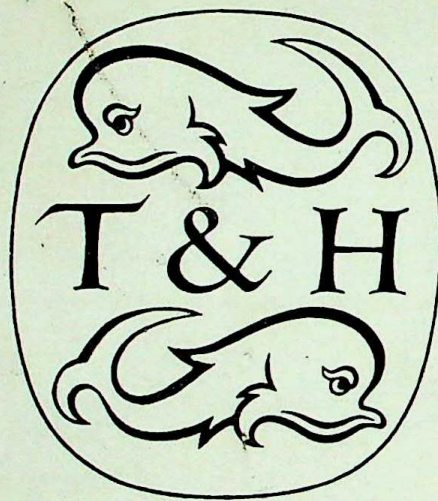
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